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# THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT BOER TREK



# THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT BOER TREK

AND THE ORIGIN OF THE  
SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLICS

BY THE LATE  
HON. HENRY CLOETE, LL.D.

HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR NATAL, 1843-44

EDITED BY HIS GRANDSON  
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## PREFACE

AT a time like the present I conceive that no apology can be required or expected from anyone who endeavours to enlighten the ignorance or to remove the misapprehensions concerning South African history and affairs which undeniably exist among great numbers of our countrymen. It is with that object that I now republish in a popular form a book hitherto not easily procurable, which gives a succinct but adequate and impartial account of the course of events in South Africa from the conquest of Cape Colony to the formation of Natal into a British colony in 1843. The book consists of five lectures delivered to the Literary Society of Pietermaritzburg in 1852-5 by my grandfather, the Hon. Henry Cloete, whose high character and attainments commanded the confidence alike of the Boer farmers, the British settlers, and Her Majesty's Government ; who was chosen as Her Majesty's



Commissioner to negotiate the final settlement of Natal; who as regards many other important events could well say "*quorum magna pars fui*," and who delivered these lectures, within ten years of the date of the Natal settlement, in presence of a mixed British and Boer audience in whose minds the occurrences dealt with were a fresh and vivid memory.

Just because the book is a condensed and dispassionate statement of facts from which inference and comment have been excluded with singular care, it requires to be read with intelligent attention. But if read with attention and some moderate exercise of political imagination, it will enable the candid student to understand the clash of conflicting interests and incompatible ideals which has created the South African question as we know it to-day. He will see in the conduct of the Colonial Office much to deplore, but not so much that can be fairly charged to official blundering if due regard be had to the conflicting impulses and ideals of the English people. He will find in the conditions prevailing in Cape Colony, when we took it over from the Dutch, elements of disorder and difficulty

with which only the highest sagacity, aided by good fortune, could have coped with entire success. While driven to confess that neither of these agencies was always present, he will nevertheless admit that the complete tranquillisation of Cape Colony and of Natal under British rule is a not inconsiderable achievement, and his forecast of the future, based upon the story of the past, will not be that of a pessimist.

When this country took over the Cape Colony, the farmers in the rural districts had been demoralised by the habit of receiving grants of blocks of from ten to thirty square miles for single farms. Civilisation and even government loses its hold upon a population so scattered. The farmers had ceased to cultivate according to civilised methods, and had relapsed into a purely pastoral and even nomadic life. The territory had become too small for this wasteful colonisation, and the Boers habitually encroached, both temporarily and permanently, upon the lands of the surrounding native tribes. These tribes not unnaturally made reprisals, especially as the treatment accorded to them was uniformly severe.

This is the kernel of the South African question. The Boer farmers tenaciously clung to their supposed rights to take as much land as they pleased, shooting as many of its owners as they saw fit, in districts which were not under the control of the British Government. They expected that Government, whose treaties they broke and whose orders they disobeyed, to intervene on their behalf whenever their proceedings provoked a Kafir rising; and the Colonial Office alternately defended them for the sake of the colony they endangered, and recoiled from the limitless responsibilities thus entailed. The right policy, of course, was to set up a chain of military posts upon the frontier and to do even-handed justice, keeping the Kafirs out and the Boers in, until the population of the colony became sufficiently dense to justify orderly annexation of new districts. But this policy actually adopted by one far-seeing Governor was reversed by his successor, and the old bad system of marauding on one side and reprisals on the other went on until it provoked the great Kafir rising of 1834.

That rising was put down by the British

Government, but the effort exhausted its patience. When the Boers claimed compensation for their losses at the expense of the British taxpayer, they were told, with perhaps unnecessary sharpness, that they had brought the calamity on themselves and must bear the penalty. They then determined that since the British Government would not adequately protect their individual encroachments they would make a combined effort and would cross the frontier wholesale to form a new settlement for themselves, where their peculiar institutions might flourish unchecked. They migrated in large bodies into the territory that is now Natal.

There was another great cause of discontent. The Boers of Cape Colony had reduced the Hottentot population to the condition of slaves, and with the Hottentot women had produced a race of half-castes known as Griquas. It is true the slavery was of the domestic or predial type found in many parts of the world, but the British public, in the heat of the abolition movement, took no notice of such a distinction, as a great part of it refuses to do to this day. Slavery was abolished, rudely, hastily, and

without regard to the complete dislocation of the social machinery which abolition brought about ; while, to crown all, the promised compensation—part of the famous twenty millions—turned out ludicrously disproportionate to the hopes that had been raised. It is not the only instance in which the British public have gratified their emotions at the expense of other people.

Up to a certain point the early history of Natal offers a curious parallel to the more recent history of the Transvaal. In the two concluding lectures the reader will see how the emigrating Boers came into contact at once with the Zulus and with a British community settled at Port Natal ; how they sought to profit by British assistance and yet to reject all British control ; how they claimed to be an independent State making treaties on equal terms with this country, which however was to have the unprofitable privilege of defending them ; how they expected help from Holland, and were ready to give that country a Protectorate ; how they cut to pieces a small British force ; and how they found eventually that there was more British force to reckon

with, and that Great Britain would never consent to relinquish sovereignty or to permit foreign intrusion. So far the parallel is complete, though the scale is different. In Natal it was found that war, instead of accentuating race hatred, laid the foundation of enduring peace. Natal is now a prosperous and loyal British colony, and but for a change of governors and policy, the Orange Free State would to-day have been in the same position. There were irreconcilables of course, and they trekked into the Transvaal, where we have missed splendid opportunities of repeating our Natal success. Let us hope that a united nation, faced by what has grown to be an Imperial danger, will not again take its hand from the plough until the furrow is cut clean and true.

Under the wise and benign rule of our gracious Queen, we have witnessed immense progress in colonial loyalty as well as in conceptions of Imperial duty. Cape Colony, the essential loyalty of which has been far too lightly called in question by superficial observers, forms, together with Natal, a standing proof that men of Dutch descent as well as

others can find under the British flag all the conditions of prosperity and contentment. Once rid of a corrupt and arrogant oligarchy, largely of extraneous origin, and of its fantastic dreams of an African dominion, there is no reason to doubt that the mixed races of the Transvaal will range themselves peaceably side by side with their brethren of the Cape and of Natal.

WILLIAM BRODRICK CLOETE.

LONDON, *October 29th*, 1899.

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# THE HISTORY OF THE GREAT BOER TREK

## LECTURE I.

### THE FIRST BOER REBELLION

THE voluntary expatriation of the Dutch farmers of the Cape Colony, and their wanderings throughout the wilds of South-Eastern Africa, which ultimately led to their occupation of this district of Natal, are so singular in their character, and are likely to bear such important results upon the exploration and further knowledge of this vast continent, that it has appeared to me not uninteresting to note down, and thus to commemorate, the principal causes which led to this migration ; more particularly as, from the party-spirit which always prevails at the very time of such political movements, the most distorted, one-sided, and false views are generally taken of the motives and objects of the principal actors engaged therein ; and it is only after the lapse of years, when time has somewhat soothed down the

passions, and calm reason has resumed its sway, that it becomes possible to obtain and impart a perfectly dispassionate insight into such events.

I should also add, that I would at once refrain from entering upon this subject if anything like political discussion can be apprehended from such an inquiry ; but as the chief actors whose names are mixed up in these occurrences are long since departed to that "bourn from whence no traveller returns," and as the grave questions which mainly produced that migration have also for ever ceased, I hope that I may now venture to touch upon them "as mere matters of history": happy, if a retrospect of those events may tend to enlighten rulers in general in the greatest of all human sciences, that of governing a people for their real welfare ; and more happy still, if my remarks upon them may produce a kindly spirit of good-will between our old colonists and our recently settled immigrants ; inform the latter of the hardships and vicissitudes which the former had to suffer to obtain possession of this favoured land, and thus induce them to look, at least without envy or jealousy, upon the advantages which (as regards the possession of lands) the former have purchased by the blood of their parents and relatives.

No one will deny that any causes which would have led to the expatriation (not of single individuals merely, but) of entire clans—at the head of which such names appear as those of Retief, Uys, and Maritz ; of Potgieter, Landman, and Duplessis ; and

of Zietsman, Boshoff, and Otto—must ever be viewed as producing a serious national calamity upon any country: that the departure of such men, taking with them their entire families and properties, has tended very seriously to affect and impair the strength of the eastern province of the Cape Colony, in the contests with the Kafir races; and that, although in the course of years some such families may be replaced, yet the words of the sweet, descriptive poet will in this case be found fully verified, viz., that

“Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,  
A breath may make them, as a breath has made;  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroyed can never be supplied.”

Having always felt a deep interest in the affairs of that colony, having been personally known to many of those earliest immigrants, among whom I counted some of my oldest and best friends, and having, moreover, personally witnessed several of those events which led to this expatriation, I may be permitted, I trust, to enter into some of those details which were so well known to me without subjecting myself to the charge of making them now a subject of political controversy, my sole object being to recall to memory some of those events which at the time were fraught with great public interest, and for which I think the time is fully come to rescue them from oblivion, as I feel confident that the mere recital of them

will now tend only to foster between us all a more friendly spirit, by producing a more correct acquaintance with each other's public history.

The first cause of the Cape colonists passing beyond the boundaries of that colony, and entering as pioneers into the wilds of the South African continent, is no doubt traceable to the inherent roving disposition of man in general; but more particularly of those descendants of Saxon origin, to whom, a thousand years ago, the wide range of the European continent was found insufficient to gratify their wandering propensities.

The Dutch Governor, Van Plettenberg, had formally defined the boundaries of the Cape Colony, in the year 1778, by the Great Fish River to the eastward, and by an ideal line\* running through (what are now called) the districts of Somerset, Graaff-Reinet, Beaufort, and Clanwilliam, up to a little rivulet, "the Koussie," flowing into the Southern Atlantic, to the north-west; but for nearly forty years these boundaries were far better respected by the colonists meeting at the eastern frontier the warlike and independent race of the Amakozée, who, far from allowing any inroads upon their own territories, commenced a system of aggression upon our colonists, which extended over the greatest part

\* By a proclamation of Sir Harry Smith, dated 17th December, 1847, and confirmed by Her Majesty, the northern boundaries of the Cape Colony have been brought up to the banks of the Great Orange River.

of the Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage districts, from which they were not finally expelled until the year 1812. This system of aggression they have never abandoned, but on the contrary have perseveringly carried on for nearly seventy years, each succeeding war having only formed them into a more dangerous, experienced, and vindictive foe. Along this extensive northern line the colonists also found little temptation to transgress those boundaries, from the arid deserts skirting the southern banks of the Great Orange River, where a few isolated Bushmen, the very outcasts of the human race, seemed to verify the fabulous accounts of the "Troglydites" of Africa, living, as they were, in holes and caves, hardly able to procure a scanty subsistence from the wild animals of the desert and from a few bulbous roots of the earth. These combined causes kept our Cape colonists for many years within the prescribed boundaries; but at the beginning of the present century small parties of a half-caste breed of European and Hottentot origin, mixing with the Mantatees, gradually occupied the lands beyond the Orange River, at the north-east boundary of the Cape Colony, and from them the race of what were called the Griquas was formed, with whom the colonists opened a regular intercourse, as they soon found that in seasons of excessive drought within the colony (where their herds and flocks were dying for want of pasture) the lands to the northward of the Orange River

were generally favoured with more frequent and regular thunderstorms, thus ensuring a better supply of grass during the summer months than the colony afforded. From that moment all the grazing farmers in that neighbourhood began to form establishments in the country between the Orange and Vaal Rivers (the Kye and the Knu Gariep), and took possession of such tracts as they found unoccupied, or otherwise entered into regular leases with the prior occupants of those lands; but they still continued to consider their domicile to be within the colony, to which they returned whenever the seasons of drought had passed away, or whenever called upon to pay their "opgaaf," or annual assessed taxes, and did not for a moment consider themselves as absolved from the duties and ties which bound them to the old colony.

This wandering habit, thus kept up and promoted by the vicissitudes and the periodical seasons of drought, was still further confirmed by the very tenure and extent of the lands granted to them within the colony.

The loan farms (subsequently converted into quit-rent lands) granted in areas never less than 6000 acres, but in those districts frequently to 15,000 and 20,000 acres—while somewhat justified by the aridity of the soil and the want of permanent springs—yet confirmed the colonists more and more in their purely pastoral or nomad habits, which gradually weaned them from all desire to cultivate their lands;

and, consequently, deadened that affection and attachment to a particular locality which is the natural result of agriculture and the improvement of the soil. On the contrary, with them their flocks and herds constituted their sole care and delight. Whenever these increased and multiplied they were content and happy; but the moment these suffered they were as ready as the patriarchs of old to strike their tents, or rather to pack up their waggons, and to go forth, either to the right hand or to the left, and to search for lands where late rains promised more abundant grass and water for their cattle.

It is important to keep this constantly in view, as explaining, from inherent causes, the facility and rapidity with which those migrations took place, and the unconcern with which, even to this day, many of our colonists are ready to flit from one district to another, for the most (apparently) frivolous reasons, taking their chance to find sufficient or better lands in the further wilds of Africa; and from these data we are, I think, warranted in drawing this apparently paradoxical conclusion: that the very possession of large tracts of country in the hands of single individuals lessens in them the affection for particular localities, that it fosters and encourages a wandering and pastoral life, which is at once opposed to that steady cultivation of the soil, which alone leads to the permanent improvement of a country; that it is opposed to all outlay of capital and labour, whereby alone even the most



fertile soils are improved and rendered productive; and that, in so far, such extensive grants will ever prove opposed to civilisation and the true interests of any country.

But other causes, nearly forty years ago, began to prepare this important movement: in these I happened to be somewhat mixed up; and as these particulars are not generally known, I believe their recital will prove of sufficient interest to claim your attention.

In the year 1813, on my return to the Cape Colony, I may assert with perfect truth that I found it enjoying such a state of general prosperity and social happiness as rarely falls to the lot of any colony, and has certainly not been felt in that colony before or after that period. The mild and conciliatory administration of the Earl of Caledon, his personally cordial and frank intercourse with all classes of society, and his princely hospitality, cemented and kept up the most friendly bond of union between the governor and governed, between the colonists and the English immigrants, and literally transformed all ranks of society into one family, to which the spirit of party, of jealousy, or of distinction of race was utterly unknown; and anyone who at that time would have entertained a thought of creating such distinctions would have been scouted and marked as an enemy to the public welfare and to society. Lord Caledon's successor, Sir John Cradock (afterwards created Lord Howden), and

his fascinating consort, Lady Theodosia, continued to keep up that hospitality, and to render the government both efficient and popular.

An end had just been put to the first Kafir war, in which the Cape colonists, with the aid of a small military force under the command of my never-to-be-forgotten brother-in-law, Col. Graham, had expelled the Kafirs from our own territory, and a line of stockaded forts placed at a distance of from twenty to twenty-five miles from each other along the whole extent of our eastern boundary had effectually secured our inhabitants from the aggression of a single marauding Kafir, upon whom instant death had been solemnly denounced as the penalty of their transgressing our boundary.

At that time also an army of about 4000 or 5000 men (among whom was one body of cavalry nearly 1000 strong), headed by a numerous staff, effectually secured our coasts from foreign foes, and our territories within the colony; and being maintained in a high state of discipline, not only tended to promote the pleasures of society, but entailing a vast military expenditure, stimulated agriculture and commerce to such an extent that the colony bore, without grudging or complaint, an expenditure which at the present day must appear hardly credible.

The Governor of that colony was then receiving out of the colonial revenue as—

Civil Governor only	.	.	•	£12,000
A Lieutenant-Governor	.	.	•	3000

A Secretary to Government	. . .	£3000
A Dep. Secretary	£1500, but with perquisites bringing it up to	. . . 3000
A Collector of Customs	. . .	1200
A Comptroller of Customs	. . .	1000
A Treasurer-General	. . .	1200
An Auditor-General	. . .	1000
A Paymaster General	. . .	1000

and on this same scale some ten or twelve officials alone (who were paid in sterling according to the rate of exchange on the pay day) received out of the colonial revenue upwards of £30,000 per annum;\* which heavy burthen upon the colony (although not then seriously felt) no doubt laid the foundation of great subsequent distress, and of many difficulties into which the Colonial Government was thrown when the general peace in 1815 brought about a vast reduction in the military expenditure, and the withdrawal of almost all the troops; when trade

\* These appointments emanated from the Colonial Office, and their salaries were fixed in *sterling* money, but having to be paid in *paper currency* (the only circulating medium within the Colony), these officials obtained payment according to the rate of exchange at the time of receiving their salaries. As these salaries became payable on the first of each month, the Governor (who alone received £1000 per month) directed the Commissary General to draw bills on England towards the close of the prior month, *and to tender these to the highest bidders for such bills*. The payment of the sterling salaries for the first of the following month was fixed on an average of the three *highest* tenders received by the Commissariat the week before, and it was remarked that several of these *sterling* officials having to make remittances to their families or creditors at home, their tenders for bills were always at the *highest* rate of exchange (but generally to a small amount), which invariably helped to fix the average.

became paralysed, and when the repeated and urgent petitions from the inhabitants at length brought about a reduction of those extravagant salaries, and led to a more uniform and well-arranged system in the payment of public servants.

One serious grievance was, however, generally felt, which, from the unsettled state in which the colony had been during the last ten years (having passed during that time through three successive and different governments—the British, the Dutch, and again the British), there had been no fit opportunity for remedying. This grievance was the want of an efficient and impartial administration of justice throughout the country districts. The Supreme Court at Cape Town could alone take cognizance of any serious civil or criminal case arising in any part of the colony: there was hardly any regular communication with the interior, and although the boards of Landdrost and Heemraden in each district could take cognizance of minor offences and civil suits of a limited amount, yet it was notorious that from the vast extent of the two districts of Graaff-Reinet and Uitenhage (which then embraced one-half of the colony) access to these two tribunals was exceedingly difficult and precarious. The absence of the two Landdrosts, who at stated intervals were required to visit every part of their districts, and the commandos against Kafirs, Bushmen, or others, which were frequently called out, and in which they generally took part, gave any

suitor a very doubtful chance of ever finding the Landdrost on his judgment-seat, but on the contrary his place there was frequently occupied by a worthy yeoman, who, as one of the Heemraden, officiated for him, but who was generally totally unfit to decide any important legal question between man and man.

The time appeared then to have arrived to remedy this evil, and one of the most important and beneficial acts of Lord Caledon's government was his directing that two of the members of the Supreme Court should annually visit as "a Commission of Circuit" every district in the colony, and there hold a court, with all such powers and authorities as were possessed by the Supreme Court, with liberty to refer any case for final determination to the Supreme Court, in like manner as at present prevails in regard to the District Court here and the Supreme Court of Cape Town.

But it cannot be denied, and experience soon showed, that justice, by being brought so much nearer to their homes, also brought to light various offences which, from the sparseness of the population and the difficulty of obtaining redress, had hitherto remained unexamined and unpunished; and the very first circuit which proceeded through the colony was furnished with a calendar containing between seventy and eighty cases, of murders, aggravated assault, and the like, which the missionaries, Dr. Van der Kemp and the Rev. J. Read, constituting themselves the protectors of the Hottentot race, and who had then

established the first missionary school or location on the frontier (at Bethelsdorp), deliberately brought forward and transmitted to the local Government as charges against the members of almost every respectable family on the frontier.

The Government, of course, referred those charges to the Commission of Circuit, with directions to institute a searching inquiry into them all, and this duty occupied the first commission for several months; but from the difficulty of getting up the witnesses and sifting the preparatory examinations a number of these cases had to stand over for the following Circuit Court, and it was not until the sitting of the third Circuit Court (at which I officiated as Registrar) that the last cases on that fearful calendar were finally disposed of; and it is but just to add that of the long list of atrocious crimes thus inquired into with the utmost care and impartiality not one single instance of murder was proved against the accused, although in a few cases acts of personal assault and transgression of some colonial law were brought home to them, and punished accordingly.

As a curious instance of the extent to which some of these informations had been received, and had been readily adopted by the missionaries Van der Kemp and Read, without properly investigating them before bringing forward such serious criminal charges, I may mention that at Uitenhage a widow of one of the most respectable inhabitants in the

district was tried on the charge of wilful murder, for having ordered a young Hottentot some years before to be brought into her house; for having directed a boiler of hot water to be prepared, and for having by force pressed down his feet into the boiling water until they had been completely scalded and his extremities destroyed !

This woman had of course to be placed in the dock and tried as a criminal on this atrocious charge; a host of witnesses were brought up and examined, from whose testimony (and many of these Hottentots themselves) it was fully proved that many years before, while this widow lived in the Lange Kloof district (which is the coldest district of the Cape Colony), this young Hottentot had been sent out to collect some cattle and drive them home, when he had been caught in a snowstorm; that not returning at the appointed time, every search had been made for him by order of this widow; that he had at length been found and brought home late at night, with his extremities quite benumbed and frostbitten; that this widow had immediately, by friction and bandages, endeavoured to restore animation to his extremities; and in her ignorance, but from the kindest motives, judging that injuries of this nature could be best cured by opposite remedies, she had ordered a boiler of hot water to be prepared, and had kept the young lad's feet therein for several minutes, from no other possible motive than from a feeling of kindness and

humanity to endeavour to restore animation in his extremities, in which she however failed; that the lad had lived for several years afterwards in her service, and that of other masters, and had subsequently died from disease quite unconnected with this injury.

This widow was of course acquitted, with every expression of sympathy by the judges on the position in which she had been placed; but it is evident that such prosecutions, in which nearly 100 of the most respectable families on the frontier were implicated, and more than 1000 witnesses summoned and examined, and in several of which the parties accused, although acquitted of the more serious charges, were mulcted in fines and imprisonment, and had, moreover, to pay heavy law charges (for in the state of the law at that time the ex-officio prosecutors were entitled to claim costs, and in many instances in which the parties were considered to have the means, did exact them\*), that all those results engendered a bitter feeling of hostility towards the administration of justice in general, and more particularly against the missionaries who had brought forward these accumulated charges against such a number of colonists.

\* The attorney-general or public prosecutor was by law entitled to claim double the amount of the law charges due to the advocates. He had to make out a regular "bill of costs," which was subject to the taxation of the registrar of the Supreme Court, and at the foot of such bill of costs the public prosecutor charged, *pro, fisco*, double, by multiplying the bill by two.



This, then, was the state of feeling generally prevalent throughout the remote country districts, when in the month of October, 1815, another Commission of Circuit, at which I again officiated as the Registrar, held its session at Graaff-Reinet, when one of those "untoward" events (to use a phrase from a Royal speech) took place, which set the whole eastern province in a blaze, drove a great mass of the population into open rebellion against their Sovereign, and brought the heads of several respectable families to an ignominious death, thereby causing an alienation from, and bitterness of feeling towards, the local Government, which a lapse of thirty-five years has not been able entirely to eradicate.

At the opening of the session at Graaff-Reinet, the Landdrost of that district, Mr. (afterwards Sir A. Stockenstrom), acting as the ex-officio prosecutor, informed the court that a farmer named Fredk. Bezuidenhout, living in the Baviaan's River district, had refused to appear before the court of Landdrost and Heemraden on a charge of ill-treatment of a Hottentot preferred against him, and that he had threatened to shoot the messenger or sheriff if he ventured again to approach his premises. He was known to be a person of a very daring character, and the Landdrost therefore applied for a warrant of "personal summons" (as it was legally termed), ordering him forthwith to appear in person before the Commission. The court granted this applica-

tion, and from the lawless habits of the individual, and his daily intercourse with Kafirs, whom, it was known, he admitted and dealt with, contrary to the law then existing, the court gave an order authorising the messenger who was sent off with the summons to call in the aid of the nearest military force, if he thought it necessary or apprehended any danger.

The messenger, upon reaching the neighbourhood, was informed that some Kafirs had been seen at the Baviaan's River, and thereupon applied to Lieutenant Rousseau, in command at the Boschberg post (now the village of Somerset), for his aid, who immediately, with twenty men of the Cape Corps, entered the Baviaan's River Poort, towards the residence of Fredk. Bezuidenhout. To a lover of nature this is a particularly picturesque spot, which was selected afterwards by Scottish immigrants, headed by Mr. Pringle, as their location. They have called it "Glenlynden," and I believe it is at present one of the most favoured settlements to be found in Somerset or Albany; but at the time of the occurrence now detailed it was only notorious for the impervious nature of the bush around, for the lawlessness of its inhabitants, and the facilities with which they maintained constant intercourse with the Kafirs, in defiance of the strict law forbidding all such intercourse under the severest penalties.

Upon approaching the residence of Bezuidenhout, they found him fully prepared to meet them; for

taking up a position (with a powerful half-caste person in his employ) behind the walls of a cattle-kraal, both being armed, Bezuidenhout called on them not to advance, as the first man would be shot! Undeterred by this menace, Lieut. Rousseau ordered his men to extend themselves in skirmishing order, and to attack the spot, when Bezuidenhout, for fear of being surrounded, after a hasty shot, which luckily took no effect, fled into his house, and, escaping through the back door, rushed into a thick bush and jungle close to the house, where, strange to say, for upwards of an hour this party of twenty active "track-finders" failed to trace the retreat of the two fugitives.

After again and again following their track up to a ledge of rocks where it at once became lost, they chanced to espy, in a remarkable precipitous impending rock or "krans," the shining muzzles of two rifles protruding from a hole in that ledge, thus announcing the lair into which they had got. Lieut. Rousseau thereupon crawled with difficulty to the top of those rocks, and there, being stationed but a few feet above the aperture of this cavern, he challenged Bezuidenhout to come out and surrender, acquainting him with the nature of his errand, and assuring him of personal safety, upon his merely engaging to accompany the messenger of the court, on the summons he was ordered to serve upon him; but the only answer he received was, that he (Bezuidenhout) would never surrender but with his life!

Finding then all his efforts vain to bring him to reason, and anxious to get out of these kloofs with his men before night, Lieut. Rousseau, keeping his position above, directed his men silently to form in two files, each party scrambling up in opposite directions from under the rock; when the heads of each column having got a few inches under the entrance, one party rushed forward and threw up the two projecting barrels, which were instantly fired off, but without effect, while the leading man of the second column fired his deadly rifle straight into the cave, from whence a cry immediately issued for mercy and surrender. All firing at once ceased, when the half-caste Hottentot crawled forth, stating that he surrendered himself, and that his master lay mortally wounded within the cave.

The men of the detachment even then with difficulty got into this grotto, which proved of stalactite formation, and of goodly dimensions within, where several guns and a large quantity of balls and ammunition were found collected, evidently showing that this place had long been prepared for a retreat in a similar emergency; and at the entrance lay the expiring corpse of the unhappy victim of his own obstinacy, having, in the recumbent position in which he had placed himself before the cave, received the fatal shot both through the head and breast.

Finding that the surrounding bush was occupied by Kafirs, with whom Bezuidenhout had kept up

daily intercourse, Lieut. Rousseau hastened to retire out of these kloofs before nightfall, taking the half-caste Hottentot in custody, whom he sent up to Graaff-Reinet, where he was put upon his trial; but after a full inquiry into all those particulars he was acquitted and discharged, and the Commission of Circuit proceeded soon after, passing by the present towns of Somerset and Graham's Town, to the town of Uitenhage, where the trial of several important cases awaited their arrival.

While engaged in the midst of these trials, an officer stationed at Graham's Town arrived one evening (having left that town the morning of the same day) with the astounding intelligence that the farmers of the Somerset and Tarka districts were all in arms, and were about to attack Capt. Andrews' post, which was stationed along the northernmost banks of the Fish River, to prevent any inroads from Kafirs in that quarter; and that Major Fraser, in command at Graham's Town, had immediately proceeded to the scene of action. Within an hour from the receipt of that intelligence Col. Cuyler, who was both Landdrost at Uitenhage and the Commandant of the Frontier, started on horseback, and within forty-eight hours, to the surprise of the rebel farmers (who were then still discussing their plan of operations), informed them of his presence, and desired to know the cause of those proceedings.

He then ascertained, that upon the death of

Fredk. Bezuidenhout, his relatives and neighbours had assembled at his farm, immediately after the departure of Lieut. Rousseau and his detachment, to commit his remains to the grave; and on that occasion John Bezuidenhout, a brother of the deceased, had become exceedingly excited, impressing upon all around that an act of gross outrage and illegality had been committed upon the deceased by his house having been surrounded and his person attacked by the military, as every burgher could only legally be arrested by his field-cornet or the civil authorities. This address had created universal sympathy, and all those present had at once engaged to avenge themselves for his outrage by attacking the nearest military post and expelling the British forces from the frontier.

They felt, however, that such plans ought to be more considered and matured before being carried out, and they had accordingly resolved to issue circular letters to the neighbours around, calling upon them to meet together and consider the present state of the country; while Cornelis Faber, a brother-in-law of the Bezuidenhouts, immediately started to hold a personal conference with the Kafir chief Gaika, to solicit him to make a joint attack upon the military posts, so as to expel the British forces from the frontier, promising him a full share in the expected booty. Several meetings were accordingly held in the more immediate neighbourhood by those inclined to join the rebels, and they

all resolved to place themselves under the command of Hendrik Prinslo, of the Boschberg, and of John Bezuidenhout; and having determined upon this first step, other circulars were more widely sent abroad to the adjoining districts, bearing the signatures of the leaders, inviting and commanding them to meet in arms at a particular spot on a day named, to "expel the tyrants from the country."

One of these circulars having providentially got into the hands of a loyal and well-affected farmer, he lost no time in transmitting it to the Deputy-Landdrost of Cradock, Mr. Van der Graaff, who forwarded it immediately to Capt. Andrews, whereupon the latter sent out a military party and apprehended Prinslo, while preparing to leave his farm to join the first assembly of men in arms. He was immediately secured and taken in custody to Capt. Andrews' post, who by this intelligence had also had time to strengthen his position and put it in some state of defence, when, two days after, three to four hundred men in arms appeared before it and summoned him to give up the post, and deliver up the prisoner Prinslo. At this time Faber joined them from Kafirland, with the unsatisfactory intelligence that Gaika had given him a most evasive reply, to the effect that he would call his Pakate\* together, and take some time to

\* The Pakate are the counsellors who always accompany the Great Chief, and without whose advice and concurrence no great public measure is ever determined upon.

consider, evidently following out the often experienced Kafir policy of watching the tide of events.

Some vacillation was thereby created in the operations of the Boers, and this became more apparent when that active officer, Major Fraser, succeeded the same evening in throwing himself into the post and opening communications with them, and when Col. Cuyler also, two days after, arrived on the spot, and informed them that all their plans were fully known, and would be signally punished. Before, however, proceeding to any extremities, a worthy field-commandant, William Nel, volunteered to go among the rebels, and if possible to avert from them the impending hazard they were running. He fearlessly continued to visit them for two days, was on several occasions in imminent danger of his life from some of the most violent and lawless of the rebels, who evidently saw that he was succeeding in opening the eyes of some to the dangerous position in which they were placed; when the leaders Faber, Bezuidenhout, and others, to counteract this impression, which they also saw manifesting itself, called the whole of their host together, and exacted from them a solemn oath, which they all took while ranged in a circle, loudly exclaiming that they would remain faithful to each other until they had expelled the tyrants from the frontier!

Col. Cuyler despairing, upon this intelligence, of bringing about their submission by peaceable means,



sallied forth the next morning early, out of Capt. Andrews' post, at the head of a troop of the 21st Light Dragoons, and a troop of loyal burghers headed by Commandant Nel, and finding an advanced post of the rebels (which they appear to have thrown out from their main body), Col. Cuyler at once ordered the troops to advance upon them, when about thirty, forming their left wing, threw down their arms in token of surrender; and the remainder falling back upon their main body, they all gave up the hope of further resistance, and slowly retired with all their waggons and cattle into the fastnesses of the Baviaan's River, where (they were well aware) a small force could hardly expect to dislodge them. Some further attempt to bring them to submission having again failed, Major Fraser on one side, the Landdrost Stockenstrom on another, and the Deputy-Landdrost of Cradock on a third point, arranged a combined movement, by which they entered and cleared simultaneously all the fastnesses of that impervious glen; the result of which was, that most of the followers of this band, now enclosed, contrived at night stealthily to escape by passes with which they were familiar; but the principal leaders still determined to reject all terms, broke up with their waggons and all their necessary "matériel," and contrived to get out of that district without direct opposition, and proceeded as far as the Winterberg, immediately bordering upon Kafirland, where they expected to meet with safety; but

Major Fraser with a detachment of the Cape Corps succeeded at length in completely surrounding them in a deep kloof, where they were come upon while outspanned; but rejecting all offers of surrender, John Bezuidenhout, Stephs., Corns., and Abraham Botman, Andries Meyer, Corns. Faber, his wife, and his young son, fourteen years old, took up a position behind their waggons, from whence they maintained a regular skirmish for some time, killing one of the Cape Corps and wounding another, and it was not until Bezuidenhout was shot, and Faber and his wife were both wounded, that the troops succeeded in taking them all prisoners.

They were from thence guarded by a military escort, and committed to the gaol of Uitenhage, where, subsequently, some fifty or sixty more persons who were traced, and known to have joined in the rebellion, were secured; and a special commission, appointed at Cape Town, soon arrived there to try the offenders. After some preliminary inquiry, thirty-nine persons out of the whole party were selected as the most culpable, who were put upon their trial on the charge of high treason, and waging war against His Majesty; and after a lengthened and painful trial, a sentence was passed condemning six of the leaders to suffer capital punishment; and all the others, after witnessing the ignominious death of their leaders, to undergo various degrees of punishment by transportation, banishment, and fines, according to the various degrees of their proved

culpability. Upon this sentence being forwarded to the Governor of the colony for his "fiat," before being carried into execution, His Excellency was pleased to commute the sentence of one of the leaders into transportation for life; but with regard to them all, the sentence directed that they should be led to a remarkable plot of ground, or plateau, called the "Slachters Nek," being the very spot where these leaders had exacted from all their followers the oath to stand by each other until they had "expelled the tyrants."

Thither they were taken under a strong military escort, and on the 6th of March, 1816, under the direction of Col. Cuyler (upon whom, both as the ex-officio prosecutor and as commandant, the duty devolved of seeing the sentence carried out), the sad preparations were made, in the presence of a large concourse of the friends and relatives of those about to undergo the punishment of death, and who were gathered together from all parts of the frontier to take a last farewell of those whose lives were to be forfeited, although it appeared that some hope was still entertained among them that their lives would be spared. In these hopes they were, however, sadly disappointed when they saw the scaffold prepared to receive the five culprits, who with perfect resignation and firmness, under the spiritual guidance of a worthy minister, the Rev. Mr. Herhold, simultaneously mounted the fatal ladder, from which, at a given signal, they were launched into eternity!

But, even then, they were doomed not to find an end to their misery ; from the hasty and imperfect manner in which the scaffold had been constructed, it proved insufficient to bear the weight and dying struggles of these five powerful men thus thrown off. The whole fabric gave way, and the unfortunate men, slowly recovering from the asphyxiated state into which they had been partially thrown, crawled up to the officer whose painful duty it was to see to the execution of that sentence, calling aloud for mercy. This was responded to by all their friends placed without the circle, who, viewing this as a signal dispensation of Providence, were with difficulty kept from forcing themselves through the military array, and with screams and shouts joined in the cry for mercy.

But the stern nature of his duty left the kind-hearted Col. Cuyler no alternative but to see the execution carried out to the letter of the sentence.

The culprits were again secured, every preparation was again hastily made, so as not to allow the day to pass within which the sentence directed the execution to take place ; and amidst the cries and clamour of their friends, the five unfortunate beings were doomed again singly to mount the ladder, and the last rays of the setting sun shone gloomily upon the five expiring sufferers, now dangling in mid-air, until life became extinct, when they were cut down and their earthly remains buried under the scaffold by the hands of the executioner (in the terms of the

sentence of the law), and amidst the cries and sobs of their friends, to whom their last request to obtain the dead bodies was refused.

Thus ended the rebellion of 1815, the most insane attempt ever made by a set of men to wage war against their Sovereign, the result of which could not have been doubtful for a single moment: it originated entirely in the wild unruly passions of a few clans of persons who could not suffer themselves to be brought under the authority of the law: the sentence passed upon them was no other than might have been expected in a case of overt rebellion thus committed; and although at the present time, with our feelings of humanity becoming daily more and more abhorrent of the punishment of death, we may think that the forfeiture of one or two lives might have amply atoned for the offence (considering the lives previously sacrificed), yet the culprits or their friends could have no cause for just complaint when, for crimes such as these, the rigour of the law was enforced; on the other hand, we need only call to remembrance our own feelings at the perusal of the thrilling pages of the immortal author of *Waverley*, to admit that pity and commiseration for the vanquished are perfectly consistent with the admission of the unlawfulness of their cause; for although we need not exactly assent to the proposition of the author of the *Pharsalia*—

“Victrix causā diis placuit sed victa Catoni,”

yet we may justly, at least, make allowance for the wounded feelings of those who were left behind.

In fact, I know, from personal interviews with several of the descendants of those who were then executed, that these events which I have how detailed, have left in their minds a far more indelible impression than even their losses by the Kafir wars, or the abolition of slavery. When here as Her Majesty's Commissioner, in 1843 and 1844, I endeavoured frequently, in converse with many influential farmers, to soothe down the feelings of hostility which they openly avowed against Her Majesty's Government; and when I had frequently (I hoped) succeeded in convincing them of the mistaken views which they had imbibed as to the principles and objects of Government in public matters, and proved to them satisfactorily, that (as regarded their future prospects) an entire new system had been laid down, and was now carrying on, to give them the enjoyment of the utmost share of rational liberty in all their political institutions; when I had succeeded so far in convincing their minds, I have more than once felt a pang to hear the embodiment of their inmost feelings expressed in the words—"We can never forget Slachters Nek!"

Such expressions, coming from the heart, could not but be respected and sympathised with, and we might only hope that the rising up of another generation would gradually obliterate such feelings; and that, as in the present descendants of those who

took prominent parts, and "were out," in the Scotch Rebellions of 1715 and 1745, *their* feelings of hostility towards the Government are long since forgotten in the unity of interests which now prevails: this would undoubtedly also here have taken place to a certain extent, if after that date two or three other events deeply affecting their interests had not tended still further to keep up and excite that distrust of, if not hostility towards, the Government, which more directly preceded and brought this vast expatriation.

If you, ladies and gentlemen, have felt any interest in this introductory address, I shall willingly devote a little more time to collect the materials and give you the details of those further events; but before I pledge myself to carry out that intention, allow me to throw myself upon your candour, at once to pronounce whether any here present conceive that in so doing I can be said to depart from that principle which I have been the first to impress upon our Council, that we should not enter upon matters of present political bearing in the district. If this be felt by anyone, I shall at once decline carrying out a task from which I only hope to derive the pleasure of producing a kindly spirit between our present immigrants and the Dutch farmers, by their becoming, as it were, more intimately acquainted with each other. I have also ventured upon this course, as I confess I do not view such a retrospect as in the slightest degree connected with the present

political state of the country, respecting which I am well aware such an entire change has taken place in the general policy of Her Majesty's Councils, that so far from wishing to withhold any rights or privileges from any of Her Majesty's subjects here, it can only be owing to their own indifference to these matters, or to the improper way of making their appeal, that such boons would be withheld from them.

In short, we have only to refer to the memorable despatch of Lord Stanley of December, 1842 (which first directed the adoption of this territory), and to the more recent speeches delivered by Lord John Russell, and very lately by Earl Grey in the House of Lords, to feel that the mists which ignorance, misrepresentation, and party spirit had for some time cast around our rulers have been completely dispelled ; and that both they and the British public in general are only anxious to see us all enjoying a full share of rational liberty, as most conducive not only to our own interests, but to those of the empire at large. On this subject I shall beg to conclude by quoting a remarkable passage to be found in the *Edinburgh Review* of April last, in an article headed "Shall we Retain our Colonies?" The words are :—

"The affection of the colonists it is easy to preserve or to recover, where, through misjudgment or misunderstanding, it has been shaken or impaired. By ruling them with *forbearance, steadiness, and justice*, by leading them forward in the path of freedom with an encouraging but cautious



hand, by bestowing upon them the fullest powers of self-government wherever the infusion of British blood is large enough to warrant such a course ; in a word, by following out the line of policy announced and defended by Lord John Russell, in his speech on the introduction of a Bill for the government of the Australian Colonies in February of the last year, we may secure the existence, and rivet the cohesion of a dominion, blest with the wisest, soberest, most beneficial form of liberty which the world has yet enjoyed, and spreading to distant lands and future ages the highest, most prolific, and most expansive development of civilisation which Providence has ever granted to humanity ! ”

## LECTURE II.

### THREE GREAT GRIEVANCES

IN my last lecture I gave the details of one of those unfortunate events which frequently mark the transition from a rude state of society to one in which the supremacy of the law becomes a principle acknowledged by all classes, as essential to the general peace of the community and as consistent with the very notion of rational liberty. The feeling of hostility towards the Government and the administration of justice, which then prevailed among the frontier farmers, would gradually have been obliterated, as they became more and more sensible of the advantages which a higher state of civilisation conferred upon them; but several other causes soon arose, which not only fed that flame of discontent, but became ultimately so burthensome as literally to drive the great majority of the inhabitants of the eastern province out of the pale of the colony, and after that movement had once commenced, it has since been found quite impossible to stem the torrent. One cause of general dissatisfaction was connected with and arose from the hasty and ill-considered measure directed

by the Home Government to redeem the paper currency, after having allowed a ruinous depreciation to take place, which judicious measures might have averted or prevented to a great extent.\* That cause of grievance is, however, more connected with, and forms part rather of, the general history of the Cape Colony; I shall therefore not enter upon that subject, except only to observe that it tended to keep up the excitement previously produced on the frontier, and caused that spirit of disaffection to become more generally and widely spread than it otherwise would have been.

But, independent of this, there arose three great and prominent causes of grievance, which bore less or more seriously upon the energies and prospects of the whole colony, but pressed with tenfold hardship upon the eastern provinces. With regard to these questions, it must also be observed at the outset that, although, for the sake of perspicuity, I shall deal with them separately, they were yet working simultaneously; the one cause preponderating in one year, and in another the second or the third cause, but all alike tending to accomplish this one end—that of driving the great mass of the population out of the further influence of those

\* An ordinance sent out by the Home Government was promulgated on the 6th of June, 1825, introducing British silver money as a legal tender, and directing it to be taken in exchange for the Cape paper rixdollar at one shilling and sixpence sterling, which had been originally issued and recognised as of the value of four shillings for every rixdollar.

measures which (several have often assured me) would otherwise again have driven them to open resistance or rebellion.

These three great grievances under which they suffered may be styled—

1. The Hottentot Question ;
2. The Slave Question ;
3. The Kafir Question ;

and it will at once be seen from the mere recital of these names that they all arose from the manner in which both the local and the Home Government were considered to be dealing with those three distinct races by which the European population was surrounded, and upon a judicious management of which the peace and prosperity of the colony entirely depended.

I shall therefore consider the prominent features of each of these three great questions, as they more particularly bore upon the interests of the frontier farmers, and which afflicted them during a period of twenty years, say from 1815 to 1835, when the migration out of the colony into Central Africa may be said to have commenced.

I have stated in my preceding lecture that the proceedings instituted by Dr. Van der Kemp and the Rev. Jno. Read, against a great number of the members of influential families throughout the country districts, caused at once a deep-seated hatred against those missionaries who had thus constituted

themselves the guardians of the Hottentot race, and also created a sense of distrust of the Government, from the manner in which (it appeared to them) that cause had been advocated and supported. In stating this fact let me not be misunderstood, nor let it be supposed that I wish to express for a moment any other opinion than that, in very many instances, it had become necessary to release that race from the state of thralldom in which they had theretofore been kept; nor do I wish to express any other opinion than that there were among those individuals who were devoting themselves to the conversion of the heathen, and spreading among barbarous nations the light of the Gospel, many excellent persons, who may be justly ranked among the greatest benefactors of the human race; and that such names as those of Kicherer, Edwards, Campbell, Moffatt, Hodgson, and the like, will ever be respected by every one who regards true religion and virtue as essential to the happiness and the eternal welfare of the human race. But, being now enlisted in the sacred cause of truth, my duty compels me equally to state that, at the time which I am now considering, there were among those who assumed to themselves the important office of teachers in the missionary schools within the colony, several persons so illiterate, and beset by such narrow-minded prejudices, as to render them totally unfit to direct the education and moral training of the Hottentot youths of both sexes; while there were even some

amongst them who, from the disreputable connection they had formed with females of that race, had lost all that respect which morality of conduct will ever command in society.

Such instances were not only marked out as warranting that dislike to missionaries in general, but the inhabitants saw, with dread and apprehension, how the Government gradually allowed the whole of that population (on which all farming pursuits on the frontier depended) to withdraw themselves from all control and agricultural pursuits, and to put themselves, moreover, under the spiritual charge of any person who, without reference to country or nation, announced himself as inclined to become the pastor of such flocks.

In this manner, within a few years, no less than "thirty missionary schools," or institutions, sprang up within the colony—where Dutchmen, Frenchmen, and Germans joined with English or Scotchmen nominally to instruct any Hottentots, or descendants of Hottentots, who felt inclined to congregate around them.

The younger ones, no doubt, received there the rudiments of some elementary education; but the older ones uniformly declared that they were "too old" to learn, but yet preferred remaining there, leading a listless, idle life so congenial to their habits, and could only be induced in the seasons of harvest, or upon urgent applications, occasionally to drive a waggon to market, and thus so far to "lend

their help"; but at such extravagant prices as at once deprived the agriculturist of his legitimate profits, and rendered such sources of labour so uncertain and precarious, that (in very many cases) he was compelled to abandon agriculture altogether, and to depend solely upon his herds and flocks for food and support. But even for the protection and rearing of these some herdsmen and shepherds were needed, but these duties they also gradually ceased to perform: so that whenever a farmer was unable, by the help of his own family, to watch his flocks by day and by night, losses became fearful, and many, in despair, were compelled to give up all farming prospects, and to take up their abode with some friends or relatives, so as to combine their resources, and thus eke out a miserable subsistence, without the chance of improving their condition, still less of providing for their offspring.

This injury was not so seriously complained of in the western, or rather south-western, provinces, near Cape Town, where, for a time, slave labour was sufficient for the wants of agriculture; but in the northern and eastern districts it was intensely felt. I have myself known farms which had been completely abandoned, by the last remaining Hottentots having given up service, or retired to the missionary schools, taking with them the flocks or herds which they had earned in their employer's service, and rejecting every offer or bribe to continue any longer in such service.

There were even many Hottentot families so destitute, or otherwise ill-behaved, that admission to the missionary institutions was refused to them; but these, rather than continue in the service of the farmers, gradually congregated themselves in the outskirts of various towns, and chiefly about Graaff-Reinet, Graham's Town, and Somerset, where they became a perfect pest to society, and a terror to all the neighbourhood, from the daring thefts and robberies which were committed by them for miles around. The difficulty, however, of tracing and punishing these offenders was so strongly felt, that nothing but the enactment of a stringent vagrant law appeared to all practical men likely to meet and overcome the evil; but the difficulties in the way of enacting such a law appeared insuperable to the Legislature, and although frequently promised by the Executive, it was deferred to the Greek Kalends, thus only increasing the disaffection by the disappointment of such expectations.

It is a singular fact, that the only relief which some of the farmers found in those districts was at places adjoining the Bushman country, where a humane and enlightened policy soon received its never-failing reward.

Up to the beginning of this century these Bushmen had been considered as utterly irreclaimable: the deadly poison which they dealt out to anyone approaching them in any suspicious attitude made them an object of universal dread and abhorrence:



they were considered as the declared enemies of the human race; and I fear that the indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children of that race was at one time considered not only as perfectly lawful, but praiseworthy.

However, about the beginning of this century, the worthy missionaries, the Rev. Messrs. Kicherer and Edwards, boldly ventured among them, and secure under the ægis of the Gospel and religion, they displayed their moral courage in the midst of the threats and the fearful scenes which they were compelled to witness, and their sublime sacrifice of every comfort, and almost of every necessity of life, in the cause of humanity, was ultimately rewarded by reclaiming at least some few clans, and establishing a friendly feeling between them and the nearest farmers.

Soon after this, also, a custom was introduced, sanctioned and encouraged by Government,\* of allowing some field-cornets of well-established humanity to visit their country on hunting expeditions, in seasons of drought and famine, when the Bushmen were seen congregating in flocks around them, and thereby acquiring the art of converting into "biltong"† the

\* This mode of reclaiming them was first recommended to Government by the "Commissioners of Circuit."

† "Biltong" (literally "hamtongue") consists of strips of raw meat, cut out of the hams, sirloins, or fleshy parts of cattle, or the larger antelopes, which, sprinkled over with salt, are exposed to a warm sun, and thus, sun-dried, constitute the usual food of the pastoral farmers for months.

produce of the chase, thus securing to themselves at least some animal food throughout those seasons of starvation.

This humane conduct of these farmers was duly rewarded, as some of these Bushmen gradually put themselves under their protection, and entered the service of the farmers around, thereby further securing to themselves and their families a certain mode of subsistence throughout the year. Their natural intelligence was soon displayed in watching the flocks; they became most faithful and trustworthy herdsmen, and I have personally visited farms in the Sneeuwberg, which had for months been abandoned by the proprietors, who had gone off to Cape Town, or to distant districts, with their entire families, leaving flocks of six, seven, and ten thousand sheep under the sole charge of one or two families of these "tame" Bushmen (as they were emphatically called); and I have been subsequently informed that such instances were by no means rare, that they invariably proved themselves fully worthy of the trust thus reposed in them, and that on the return of their masters they would, with the help of their "kerfstok" (or nick-stick) account for the loss of every ewe, wether, or lamb which had died or been lost with a distinctness and fidelity truly surprising.

From a note appended to one of the inimitable chapters of the *Antiquary*, Sir Walter Scott (it would appear) notices these "nick-sticks" as peculiar to the bakers in Scotland two or three centuries ago. It

may not prove uninteresting to an Oldbuck of Monkbarns to trace whether the Caledonian bakers acquired that knowledge from the Bushmen of South Africa, or *vice versa*; but to those who feel disinclined to adopt either theory, it may suffice to consider how, in a primitive state of society, men will be found to resort to the same rude means of aiding their memories and sharpening their intellect, without reference to latitude or country.

In those few districts then immediately adjoining the Bushman country some substitute was partially found for their loss of their Hottentot servants, but throughout the remainder of the eastern province it must be acknowledged that the numerous missionary schools, and last of all the extensive establishment at Kat River, took from the service of the farmers every Hottentot or servant of Hottentot descent, who were not only induced to retire to those schools as the abode of ease and indolence, but were moreover taught to consider themselves as a distinct and separate race, who "ought" not to owe any service to the Saxon farmer.

And this leads me to notice a far more serious evil still than the mere loss of labour, which arose from the system pursued in regard of the Hottentot race, the effect of which, although long predicted by many persons, had been only considered as "Cassandra's" prophecies, until the late events have exposed them in their fearful reality; and they can now, therefore, only be noticed as historical

lessons, from which rulers may derive useful warnings in legislating for and governing different races in one and the same country.

I have already noticed that at most (if not in all) these schools or institutions within the colony the Government did not claim or exercise the slightest interference or control; occasionally, even, disclosures were made which clearly showed that in some of them a magisterial authority was assumed to punish offenders by juries, and modes of punishment were devised by the missionaries within such schools altogether inconsistent with the first principles of justice; but these even appear to have been passed by without official notice; and upon this principle of the Government becoming more and more apparent, the missionaries also became the more confirmed in the authority which they assumed, as well over the temporal as the spiritual concerns of those who came to their schools.

With the exception of the simple-minded Moravian brethren (whom I would willingly distinguish as a marked exception), I believe, I am bound to state that almost universally the notion was studiously inculcated in the minds of the Hottentots that they not only had been, but still continued to be, an oppressed race; that despite the Magna Charta granted them by the Government, in the so-called 50th Ordinance, the white people were still ready at all times to injure them; and such notions, I fear, were instilled with great earnestness in the minds of

the large mass of Hottentots who were congregated in the Kat River settlements. This notion, no doubt, laid the foundation of the rebellion which has so fatally complicated the present Kafir war; but upon these events it is not my wish to dwell any further, as I only desire here to state that, many years ago, I noticed that feeling of "national alienation" (as it may be called) arising, and anticipated that those seeds of antipathy and hostility of races would inevitably yield those poisonous fruits from which the colony has of late been suffering.

This will be sufficient to mark how the gradual withdrawal of the whole Hottentot race from agricultural or pastoral service—and the spirit of hostility which manifested itself in them towards the frontier colonists—left the latter no other remedy than to resort to the sad alternative of seeking elsewhere for a place where their herds and flocks might be safe, and where they might obtain labour on more easy terms.

II. But great and serious as this cause of grievance became, it proved quite secondary to the intensity of feeling with which the colonists saw the steps taken by the Government to deprive them of that labour over which they claimed an unquestionable right of property.

It is a singular fact, and one, I believe, not generally known, or at least not sufficiently considered, that during the last century, while all other colonies belonging to European powers were inundated by

slaves (chiefly imported by British vessels), the Government of Cape Colony had always been averse to the introduction of slaves; that by various stringent proclamations their importation had been prohibited, and that from time to time (generally once a year) a special licence was issued only for a limited number to be imported, upon the earnest representations of the colonists, and proportionate to their increasing numbers and the wants in agriculture.

During the short administration of the Batavian Government, from 1803 to 1806, various proclamations and acts also manifested an intention in that Government to put a speedy end to the existence of slavery in the colony; and thus, during this century, a very small number of slaves indeed of the negro race had trodden the colonial soil. The natural consequence was that nine-tenths of the slave population consisted of house-born slaves, who were looked upon more as family domestics, and treated like the *Vernæ* of the Romans. They were trained to various trades and professions; were never worked in gangs, and in fact enjoyed all the privileges and comforts which free domestics could possibly claim. The value of such slaves increased daily, with the increase and greater demands of the free population, and not unfrequently £400, £500, and £600 were readily given for a single slave well instructed in certain trades. It was but a natural result, from such a state of things, that slaves of this value should be well treated, and also that they knew their rights and

how to maintain them; and although, no doubt, in the course of ten or twelve years, two or three instances of very severe ill-treatment and even of murder were brought before the courts and tried, and were loudly denounced by (what was falsely called) the philanthropic press, yet it would be as unjust to infer from such cases a charge of general ill-usage of their slaves against their masters as it would be to lay to the charge of the populations of Edinburgh or of London the murders of Burke, of the Mannings, of Rush, and the hundred others, accounts of which pollute almost every English paper.

Soon after the general peace of 1815 it became but too apparent that the public mind in England was directed to the total extinction of slavery, the leading men of all parties having openly avowed that in having gained the triumph of the abolition of the slave trade, they only viewed this as a stepping-stone towards the attainment of the greater measure; and, as preparatory to that step, various local laws were introduced considerably curtailing the authority and power of masters over their slaves. The most important one was a local ordinance, passed in 1826, by which a new office of guardian or protector of slaves was created, who, by himself and his deputies, had particularly to look to the protection of their interests. Every slave thereby acquired a right to compel his master to grant him his liberty if he could obtain the means of commanding his price at a fair valuation by persons indifferently chosen. The hours of labour

were fixed, and various other stringent rules were introduced, at once creating a power which could interfere on behalf of the slave in all the domestic concerns of every household. It may easily be imagined how such a system at once produced an alienation from that good feeling which existed before in these relations. The slave, heretofore accustomed to receive any favour or indulgence through his master or mistress, now saw another power arising which could grant these by virtue of his office; and the masters, jealous of that power, frequently withheld, upon principle, what they would readily have conceded as a matter of grace.

From that moment, therefore, that kindly feeling which had before existed on both sides may be said to have expired, and the whole country began to feel the ill effects of this undue and inconsistent interference. But the Home Government, not satisfied with these colonial laws, passed in February, 1830, an Order in Council, by which a host of protectors were further appointed to be the special guardians of slaves in every district, and to enforce still more stringent rules against the slightest act of injustice committed towards their slaves, who were expressly declared not to be liable to any punishment for preferring any frivolous complaints against their masters, "unless such complaint shall arise from some malevolent or culpable motive" (*vide* Section 72 of the Order in Council), while for any, even the slightest contravention of any of the provisions of that Order in



Council, by the master or mistress, a penalty never less than £10 nor more than £500 is denounced. (*Vide* Section 74.)

But the feature which particularly denounced this Order in Council was exhibited in the sections by which every year the proprietors of any slaves employed in agriculture or manufacture were required to take out from the office of the protector, or assistant protector, a book styled in the Order in Council a "punishment record book," in which every such proprietor was compelled to make himself (if he could write), or otherwise cause to be made, an entry of every punishment of whatever kind he may have inflicted upon every slave, detailing with the greatest minuteness every particular of the offence, of the punishment, of the witnesses to it, etc. This book every such slave-owner was required to take twice every year to the protector or assistant protector within his district, and there to swear to the correctness of these entries, and if at any time thereafter a complaint might be preferred before any of the protectors of any punishment having been inflicted, and the "record book" did not show a perfectly true and correct statement of every circumstance connected therewith, the master was to be tried for wilful and corrupt perjury, independent of the punishment he might be liable to in respect of the complaint itself!

It is impossible to describe the excitement which pervaded the length and breadth of the colony when

these provisions became known: the slave-owners at once, with one consent, resolved to resist a law involving so iniquitous a principle, as that everyone should be called upon to enregister his own misdeeds and swear to them; and they sent from all quarters some delegates to Cape Town, who there joined with the slaveholders in and near the town to hold one of the largest public meetings ever held in the colony; where they unanimously pledged themselves not to take out these "punishment record books," and in the enthusiasm of the occasion they passed a resolution to walk up in a body to Government House to submit this their firm resolve personally to the Governor. His Excellency, having been previously apprised of their intention (by a deputation sent up in advance), some 3000 to 4000 persons marched up in procession to Government House, and being received by His Excellency Sir Lowry Cole, under the stately oaks at the Grave Street entrance, the late Mr. Muntingh and myself having been called to the unenviable task of being their spokesmen, had the painful duty of solemnly assuring His Excellency, in the name of the assembled throng and of all the slave-owners throughout the colony, "*that they could not, and would not, comply with this law*"; that they were ready one and all to submit to the penalties therein enacted, but implored His Excellency to release them from the operation of a law which appeared to them a violation of every principle of justice. This step taken by the slave-owners was denounced at the

time by the philanthropic press as an attempt to intimidate the Governor, but we felt well convinced that the hero who did not quail under the murderous fire of the French when crowning the heights of Albuera, and fixing the victory on that momentous day, was not likely to be intimidated by 3000 or 4000 persons walking peaceably up to implore his protection and sympathy against an iniquitous law ; and the result proved that they had not mistaken his feelings ; for although His Excellency (as might have been expected) declared that he could not take upon himself to annul or even suspend the operation of the law, he yet promised that he would not fail to report to the Secretary of State the great excitement which this provision had created ; and the colonists had the satisfaction of finding soon after that under an authority from the Secretary of State, directions were given to all functionaries not to enforce that regulation, which thus became a dead letter, and was only "observed in the breach."

From the manner in which the Government was thus interfering with the slave question, it became perceptible to everyone that the early abolition of slavery was aimed at ; and many of the liberal-minded persons amongst the slave proprietors accordingly determined to evince their disposition to concur with the Government in this object as far as they could consistently with their interests, and they established a "Philanthropic Society," the object of which society was to buy up all young

females just reaching the age of puberty, to emancipate these immediately, but to place them for three or four years with persons of their own choice as apprentices until they had procured some little funds, and had been sufficiently trained to be entrusted with a state of perfect freedom.

By this means in a few years two or three hundred young females were purchased and manumitted, thus at once preventing any increase of slavery, and the society had so many voluntary applications of masters or mistresses to confer this boon upon all young females, that want of funds alone precluded the society from extending its beneficial influence all over the colony. They therefore endeavoured to obtain the support of the Government, and showed that by an annual sum of £7000 or £8000 being voted by the Imperial Parliament for such an object, the operations of this institution might be so enlarged that within very few years all female slaves would have been reclaimed from slavery, that also every able-bodied slave who might wish to be emancipated, and who had acquired the right by law to insist upon compulsory emancipation, might have obtained the funds to attain this object, so that gradually and imperceptibly slavery would have ceased to exist in nine or ten years, at a sacrifice to Great Britain of some £70,000 or £80,000 paid out in a series of years. But the only reply that these slave-holders, who were thus anxious to see liberty diffused without serious loss to themselves and a

disruption to society, was that this would never satisfy the impatience of the British public, who were bent upon instant and universal freedom!

In this manner their object was paralysed, and in the meantime the Order in Council was still brought into rigid operation; and for the most trivial offences a fine never less than £10 was inflicted on every master or mistress (for sometimes even a mistress would lose her temper and slap a termagant, whose aim and pleasure it became to bring their mistress to the utmost verge of passion); and in more serious cases the parties were tried by indictment, and very heavy penalties inflicted; and such became the universal detestation of the law and its effects, that it is not too much to say that the slave-owners generally became anxious for the day which was to put an end to the torture which they were suffering under the lash of this law.

That Act, so wished for, was at length passed by the Imperial Parliament in August, 1833, and in the beginning of the following year a new Governor (Sir Benjamin D'Urban) came out with express orders to carry it into operation.

By that Act, on the 1st of December, 1834, slavery was for ever to be abolished in the colony; and the late slaves, after passing through four years of apprenticeship, were finally to be free from all control on the 1st December, 1838. During that interval of four years the arrangements were also to be completed, by which the £20,000,000,

generously awarded by the British nation as a compensation to the slave-owners, were to be apportioned out to each colony, and paid over to those whose slaves were to be put in freedom.

The amount to be awarded to each colony, and more particularly to each slave-owner, was thus at first altogether problematical. Appraisers were appointed by the Government, who were ordered to examine personally every slave, and setting aside every consideration arising from a *pretium affectionis* (as lawyers term it), were to bring them all within certain classifications and fix an average value upon them.

This appraisement was conducted with perfect fairness (with the single exception of the district of George, where it was shown to be palpably corrupt, and was accordingly revised and amended); and the returns showed that upon 35,745 slaves found within the colony a sum of about £3,000,000 would be required to pay for them, thus yielding an average of about £85 a head.

The slave proprietors at once admitted the right of the Government in the exercise of its *dominium eminens* to take from every private person any property for the attainment of a public good; and they appeared generally satisfied, even with this appraised value, although in very many instances (from the prices I have already stated that slaves were readily sold for) it was clear that serious loss would be sustained, and chiefly by persons who

possessed the most valuable slaves. But it was soon seen that this appraisement had still to undergo the rule of reduction, and that the object of the appraisement was not to ascertain the average amount which every *slave-owner* would receive, but only the proportion which would be awarded to *each colony* out of the compensation fund of £20,000,000; and upon that computation being made by the commissioners at home, it soon proved that instead of £3,000,000 which the slave-owners at the Cape expected to receive, the sum of £1,200,000 only would be available for them, thus reducing the average value of each slave per head from £85 to £33 12s.; and I cannot give a more striking instance of the loss so sustained by the proprietors of valuable slaves than by stating in my own case that for a slave for whom I had frequently refused £500, and might have commanded £600, I found, according to the highest average for that class of slaves, a sum of £60 nominally awarded to me, but by the mode of payment ultimately received even that pittance reduced to £47 or £48.

This sudden and extraordinary reduction in the amount to be received from what had previously been anticipated proved ruinous to many families, as the capitalists to whom many of these slaves were mortgaged, foreseeing that they would not be paid out of the compensation fund, immediately commenced proceedings against the principal debtors and sureties, sold off their goods and chattels, and

thus reduced many respectable families to distress, if not to actual want.

But the evils arising to the colonists did not stop there. When the assistant commissioners in the colony had so far proceeded in their work as to make out the proportionate sums which were to be awarded to each proprietor, it became known that these amounts could only be received at the Bank of England, and had to go through various forms, at various offices in London, before such payments could be made. This they at once saw would be placing them at the mercy of certain agents, through whom alone this could be accomplished; and a very numerous meeting of slave-owners was again held in Cape Town, from which emanated a respectful petition to the Government, praying that the amount awarded to each person might be paid them "in the colony," either in cash or by Treasury drafts, thus ensuring to them at least the certainty of receiving the sums finally awarded without any deductions. But this petition was at once rejected as inexpedient or impracticable, and all the slave-owners (not ten of whom had any personal agent in England) were driven to the necessity of resorting to a few persons in Cape Town, and Graham's Town, who (setting themselves up as alone acquainted with the requisite forms) bought up these certificates at 18 to 20, and in the country districts (I verily believe) from 25 to 30 per cent. discount, bringing down this paltry pittance—already



reduced to one-third of the appraised value of their slaves, as certified by the Government appraisers themselves—still further to about one-fifth of that amount. And can it then be wondered at, that very many persons thus reduced to absolute want and ruin should have been unmeasured in their abuse of a Government which, intent upon one great and laudable object, yet appeared determined upon carrying it through, utterly regardless of the master's rights and interests; and that some of them became so incensed against the Government that they have to this day indignantly rejected the paltry sum awarded to them, although repeatedly pressed upon them; so that the Colonial Government holds still at this moment about £5000 unpaid, which those entitled to receive it will not take, although tendered to them again and again, as its receipt would only deprive them of what they conceive to be a legitimate cause of grievance.

In this state of feeling then, when most of the slave-owners had seen their nominal compensation frittered away to the smallest possible fraction, the sun rose on the eventful 1st of December, 1838, to shed its lustre on a day of universal and unrestricted freedom to all persons in Southern Africa; and it is but just to add that the perfect propriety of demeanour with which that blessing was hailed and accepted by 35,000 individuals, has fully established their capacity for the enjoyment of those privileges which they have now possessed for thirteen years.

Yet no words can adequately convey the effect which that day produced also on the prospects of the whole of the agricultural interests throughout the colony.

In and near Cape Town, where a large population of free blacks, and persons willing to engage in service, were found ready to supply the place of these emancipated slaves, their departure (although attended with some inconvenience and additional expense) could in some measure be supplied; but no pen can describe how, in the country districts, this migration was felt. Masters and mistresses who, up to the evening before, had forty, fifty, and some eighty persons engaged in keeping up extensive farming establishments, saw, in one moment, the whole of their farming pursuits and plans destroyed: no bribe nor entreaty, I believe, did avail in one single instance to induce any one of these now free persons to stay over that day; for a lady having a pet canary pent up for months or years in a cage (the object of her most tender care and affection) might as soon expect to keep it in, if setting the cage door open, as that the entreaties of their masters and mistresses would be heeded on such an occasion; and as misfortunes, proverbially, never come singly, the day for this general emancipation, without any thought of, or reference to, the general interests of the colony, had been fixed for the very midst of the wheat harvest, which was seriously affected by it; for although in a very few

instances some hands were induced by large rewards to stay just to cut down the crop, yet they also immediately followed their companions, all crowding to the towns and villages, where they could find ready subsistence and easy work; so that on that day not only many of the agricultural farmers saw themselves reduced to poverty and distress by the paltry payments they had received, but were moreover deprived of the only means of cultivating their farms profitably for the future; and although this state of depression has in some measure at present subsided in and near the capital, where many of these slaves have again voluntarily returned to those habits in which they had been brought up, and where the farmers, from a proximity to the market, could afford, or at least were compelled, to give somewhat remunerating wages for labour, yet in the eastern country districts this was impossible, and the agriculturists there found themselves totally deprived of every vestige of labour to improve or cultivate their farms, or even to superintend or herd their flocks.

III. I shall now proceed to the third and last cause of general grievance felt throughout the eastern province.

In my last lecture I noticed that after the war of 1812 the Kafirs had been completely expelled out of the Cape Colony, and that a number of stockaded posts, stationed at short intervals along the whole line of the frontier, effectually secured

the country against the inroad of a single marauding Kafir; but it was evident that such a system could only be maintained by unceasing vigilance, and by a very strong military force, chiefly of cavalry, to scour the intermediate country; and for upwards of two years after that period, in addition to the military detachments, a number of armed burghers, out of every district, were regularly "commanded" and kept up under military discipline to furnish these posts. I have myself seen parties stationed along the Fish River, from the Worcester and Clanwilliam districts, who, for eighteen months, had thus been kept on this harassing duty. Their incessant complaints, however, had led to their being gradually withdrawn; but unfortunately, in consequence of the great reduction of the army at the general peace of 1815, the military force was not only greatly reduced, but the strong and efficient body of cavalry which had hitherto maintained a rapid intercourse between all these posts was also removed from the colony, rendering it necessary to abandon most of these stations on the outer line of the frontier, and to limit the defence of that country to the headquarters at Graham's Town, and one or two other isolated stations.

The Kafirs (and particularly those of the tribe of T'Sambie and Congo, who had been dispossessed of their favourite haunts in Lower Albany) at once watched and seized the opportunity for gradually recovering that country, and recommenced their

system of plunder, rendering that country so insecure that the inhabitants, in November, 1816, represented in the strongest terms their distress on the frontier; how all the advantages of the great commando of 1812 had been lost, and that they would be compelled to abandon their farms on the line of that frontier.

This induced the then Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, to repair personally to the frontier, and in April, 1817, he had a formal interview with Gaika, T'Sambie, and almost all the other great chiefs, who (as usual) expressed themselves most anxious to maintain peace, throwing the blame of the depredations complained of on young warriors, who would go out on these forays without their sanction; but upon receiving the further assurance that no reprisals were intended, and that the Government neither wanted their land nor cattle, they seem, for a time, to have exerted their influence with some effect, for the country may be said to have again enjoyed a short interval of complete repose and security.

Many farmers from the interior, in consequence, gradually resumed their lands in the Zuurveld, and it was remarkable that the tribe of the Amakozee, under Gaika, who was at that time directed by the Rev. Mr. Williams, proved themselves to be the most faithful in carrying out their engagement with the Government.

The herds of the farmers soon increasing afforded, however, again an irresistible attraction to the tribes

of T'Sambie and Congo, who under the cover of the Kap and the Fish River bushes could at any time get into Albany; and in 1818 the old system of plunder and forays again commenced, and was carried on to a great extent; and what is more remarkable, either from family feuds or (as they openly alleged) complaining that Gaika was too faithful an ally to the British Government, they openly declared war upon him, and in a single engagement overthrew all his forces, capturing his wives and his cattle, and thus threw him entirely upon the Government for protection.

As Gaika had certainly proved faithful ever since the treaty of 1817, the Government sent a military force, under Colonel Brereton, to support and restore him to his authority. A series of engagements ensued, in the course of which T'Sambie and Congo were utterly defeated, Gaika was replaced in his former position as the great chief, and a large quantity of cattle was taken, which was divided between Gaika's tribe and such of the farmers as had been called out in aid of the military.

The force then sent out, although quite sufficient to inflict chastisement, was still unable to shut up and guard all the passes into the colony, so that those tribes soon again recommenced, or rather continued, their hostilities, displaying then all the art and ability in the conduct of such wars, at which they have since become such perfect adepts. Watching their opportunity from the vantage

grounds which they held on the eastern banks of the Fish River, they made two successful sallies upon two small military patrols marching along that river, in both of which the commanders (Captain Gethin and Lieutenant Hunt) and a large portion of the military fell, the former of whom (Captain Gethin) was, without exception, one of the finest officers in His Majesty's service, who had commanded the forlorn hope in the last daring assault of St. Sebastian, and had been the first to plant the British standard upon those walls which had twice resisted successfully the most murderous and best-planned storming parties.

To punish such unceasing attacks another "commando" on a larger scale was called out in March, 1819, under the command of Colonel Wiltshire (the conqueror of Kelat), and this "commando," from the small military force then in the colony, was to consist mainly of the armed *levée en masse* of the male population of the eastern and western provinces; but while these parties called out from each of these distant districts were collecting, and their advance impeded by that fatal disease (the horse-sickness), which at certain intervals breaks out in the eastern province (carrying off almost all the horses kept in the field), these tribes of T'Sambie and Congo, headed or rather excited (as in the present war) by one of those witch-doctors,\* who occasionally

\* The name of this witch-doctor was "Lynx." He was subsequently captured and sent into captivity to Robben Island, from

succeed in elevating them to a state of fanaticism, adopted a plan which had hitherto been supposed as impossible to expect from them. Emerging at the break of day from out of the Fish River bush, a force of about eight to ten thousand men were suddenly seen to blacken the eastern horizon, advancing in battle array upon the attack of the very headquarters of the military at Graham's Town. Two field-pieces (six-pounders) were providentially ready on the spot, and these, with a small military force then at hand, immediately advanced out of the town to repel the invasion, but, surrounded and pressed by overwhelming numbers, they were compelled to fall back; the field-pieces had thrice to be limbered up and take up positions in the rear, and it was not until they had taken up their last stand in and among the few houses then forming that town that the deadly grape and canister discharged upon them took effect and compelled them to retire.

This display of their force and daring, and of the precarious tenure on which the frontier was held, at length forced our rulers to adopt the suggestion which, years before, had been pressed upon them, viz., that it was "physically" impossible to protect the frontier with the dense Fish River bush in the

whence he made a desperate effort, with two or three other convicts, to escape by means of a boat which they seized, but in endeavouring to land on the opposite shore of Blauwberg the boat, was swamped and all the runaways perished.



possession of the Kafirs, and accordingly the order was at length given to Colonel Wiltshire to expel the Kafirs from the country between the Fish River and the Keiskamma, and to seize and occupy that country, which was more open and easily defended.

This commando (or second general war) was also crowned with complete success ; a vast colonial force was at length brought together, and by a series of able and combined operations the Kafirs were driven completely out of those fastnesses, and the country between the Fish River and Keiskamma became occupied by the Government forces.

But even then the Colonial Government was so averse to extending this colony that orders had been already issued to give up again that intervening country to Gaika and his tribe, as he had ever since 1813 succeeded in impressing upon the Government that he had been inviolably faithful to them, and having in fact owed his life and restoration to power to their assistance in 1817. Yet in the course of these operations it was found that his men were engaged among the ranks of those who had openly attacked Graham's Town ; that many of his leading guides had taken a prominent part therein, and that his chief interpreter, Hendrik Nootka, had been shot in the very act of attempting to stab Colonel Wiltshire in the attack on Graham's Town.

Before finally adopting any measure in regard to that territory, Lord Charles Somerset therefore again

repaired to the frontier in 1819, and there concluded a formal treaty with Gaika and all the Kafir chiefs assembled on Somerset Mount, when he pointed out to them the absolute necessity which their incessant attacks during the last seven years had forced upon the Government of incorporating that tract of country; and with their entire concurrence the terms were agreed upon, by which it was stipulated "that all Kafirs should evacuate the country between the Great Fish River and the Kieskamma, and from the boundary of the colony on the opposite side to a line drawn from the Winterberg to the sources of the Kieskamma." It was, however, further agreed that this country should not be occupied by the farmers but lie open, forming, as it were, a *neutral* ground between the two nations.

It certainly does appear to us now, judging *ex post facto* and after a lapse of years, as somewhat extraordinary, that persons possessed of the intelligence which distinguished both our then Governor and those around him should have adopted a measure which the most ordinary common sense of any practical peasant at once foretold was to be again the cause of endless dispute, and, in fact, of the undoing of everything that had been done before.

The Governor had no sooner returned to Cape Town than small parties of Kafirs again felt their way into this ground; and upon the government

of the colony falling into the hands of Sir Rufane Donkin, as acting Governor, during the years 1820 and 1821, he immediately saw the folly of such treaty, and, repairing to the frontier, he effected a modification in its terms, by which the Kafir chiefs at once declared, that though they strongly objected to isolated farmers being settled therein (as these would be liable to be plundered, which would bring the nations again at war), they yet agreed that military posts should be stationed therein, and that under their protection a body of British emigrants, who had just then entered the Albany district, should be placed and concentrated near such posts.

Upon this understanding, then, the military posts of Frederick's Burg and Fort Wiltshire were established in this from that time called "ceded" territory, at each of which it was contemplated to keep an efficient military force as a vanguard for the protection of our frontier, and in the meanwhile the attention of the Home Government had been directed to the capabilities of the Albany district, and 5000 emigrants arrived under the aid of a grant from Parliament, where lands were distributed among them, which, it was hoped, would form the nucleus of a thriving population, and prevent at once the reoccupation of that district by the Kafirs.

Everything that an enlightened and humane policy could devise was now set on foot to promote friendly relations with the Kafir tribes. Fairs were established, where they might come to buy and sell what-

ever they required or wished to dispose of; passes were offered to all those who wanted to enter the colony, and for a short time peace and amity seemed to prevail. But, unfortunately, on the return of Lord Charles Somerset the policy of occupying the "ceded" ground was abandoned: the post of Frederick's Burg was ordered to be broken up; the applications by emigrants for lands in that district were refused, and those which had been partially granted or promised were revoked, and to their surprise the Kafirs saw that the bone of contention, which they had been compelled reluctantly to yield, was again given up and virtually surrendered to them, in consequence of which small parties of Kafirs were seen again gradually taking possession of that country; and although no open rupture took place, and, on the contrary, every encouragement was held out to them to attend the fairs and keep up friendly relations with the recently-arrived emigrants, who freely entered with them into trade or traffic, yet not a month passed by that some cattle were not carried off, and that some life was not lost, so that the utmost vigilance was required to prevent a general incursion or attack upon the frontier. To check any attempt of that kind the Cape Corps, which was now almost the only protection for the frontier, was gradually transformed into a cavalry corps, and they no doubt very efficiently guarded that boundary line from any overt attack; yet this constant state of insecurity soon

extended itself up to the Winterberg and Somerset districts, and along the whole line of that country it became quite impossible for any farmer to consider his life or property secure. In the year 1828 the old chief T'Sambie died, and his death was soon followed by that of Gaika, in 1829; and in a short time a very perceptible change took place in these two great clans, which immediately bordered our frontier. T'Sambie's successors were Pato, Kama, and Cobus Congo; these had intermixed a good deal with the emigrants, and, under the able guidance and instruction of the Rev. W. Shaw, had been perceptibly improved both in their habits and feelings, and the effect of such improvement was soon apparent in their more earnest desire to maintain peace with the colonies.

The Amakozee tribe, on the contrary, now fell under the sway of Macomo and Tjalee, the first of whom, although Gaika's eldest son, not being of such high descent on the mother's side, was not acknowledged as sole or paramount chief, but seemed to derive an equal authority with his younger brother Tjalee. Writing of the former (Macomo), it is singular that Colonel Scott should have prophetically stated in 1822 "that he promised to give much trouble to the colony," although Colonel Scott could little expect that during thirty years this chieftain should prove so formidable, as he has continued to show himself up to the present moment.

However, under their authority the Amakozee

soon became more and more daring, so that the Government felt driven to the necessity of establishing a post at Fort Beaufort; but about that time a singular occurrence took place, somewhat connected with this district, which ought not to be passed by unnoticed.

Chaka, the great Zulu chief, having depopulated this entire district, made, in the year 1828, a most savage inroad upon Kafirland Proper, with an overwhelming force. Having first overrun this district, and ravaged the country of the Amapondas, he drove the remnant of all these tribes, under the name of Fetcanee, upon the Kafirs; and such was the terror of their name that the latter implored the aid of the Government against this formidable enemy. All the burgher forces near the frontier were again hastily called out to take arms, troops were collected, and this force crossing the Kye advanced to the Umtata, where in some partial engagement the dreaded foe was repulsed, although I believe it is a matter of doubt to this day whether the foe thus defeated was part of Chaka's forces, or only tribes of Amapondas and others which had fled before him. However, after this harassing duty was again passed by, Chaka retreated, and was murdered in this district, near the Umvoti River, by his brother Umslangaan, and other councillors who were about him; and these again, but a few days after, were all butchered by Dingaan, who thus became undisputed chief of the Zulus.

The force then displayed by the Government, and the aid immediately afforded to the Kafirs, showed them again the earnest desire of the Government to promote peace with them; and of this they received a striking proof. On an occasion a farmer having reported to a military officer that 120 head of cattle had been taken from him, a Lieutenant Ross went upon some traces, which led to a Kafir kraal, where these cattle not being forthcoming the same number were exacted, and given up; but, a few days after, the farmer having reported that the cattle supposed to have been stolen had been found by him elsewhere, the whole number of cattle were immediately again restored to the kraal from which they had been obtained.

From facts such as these the Kafirs ought to have seen that nothing but the most friendly disposition was felt towards them by the Government, but a cankerous sort of irritation unquestionably continued to prey upon them, from the false step which the Government had first taken in regard to the neutral or ceded territory. The moment the Kafirs saw that it was not fully taken possession of, nor permanently occupied, they were unceasing in their applications to be allowed at least to depasture that tract of country. This being once conceded they naturally formed their huts, and in the proper season planted their gardens, thus virtually taking entire possession; but depredations again taking place within the colony, after incessant and generally

fruitless patrols to pursue and recover the cattle, a strong military force had invariably to be sent into that territory to eject those who had squatted down. This was uniformly resisted, when the huts had to be burnt, the gardens destroyed, and the occupants again driven beyond the Keiskamma; until, after one or two seasons, upon urgent applications on the plea of drought or bad crops, the like concession was again made, to be again followed by the same train of burning huts and ejectments, and their expulsion from out of this territory.

In this state of unrest, then, the whole of the inhabitants of the frontier were kept during fourteen years.

There was no war declared with the Kafirs, yet not a week passed that some robbery or plunder was not committed. In this manner the stock of the neighbouring farmers was gradually thinned and swept away by incessant forays, which were made either by young Kafirs whenever desirous of possessing themselves of a few head of cattle to purchase wives, or by older Kafirs, who having been "eaten up" in their own kraals, were anxious to restore themselves to wealth or authority: in all such cases, however, any farmer complaining of these robberies was generally accused by the authorities of either exaggeration or of downright falsehood in his statements; and when in the attempt to recover his cattle any collision took place with the Kafirs the latter were very generally



excused, some blame was uniformly tried to be thrown on the farmer, and it became but too manifest that the Government did not wish to acknowledge the existence of a state of insecurity, which they either hoped would gradually pass away, or, if admitted, would only compel them openly to declare and commence an active war.

Upon this principle, then, the Government would not admit the extent of these injuries, and seemed inclined rather to expose their subjects to these losses than provoke hostilities with an enemy whom they were not inclined to cope with.

During this same period the capabilities of this district of Natal had become obscurely known from the visits of Lieutenant Farewell and Captain King, and the accounts of several of their companions being brought to the Cape, a society was soon formed for the exploration of Southern Africa; and Dr. Smith, with a very respectable party of travellers, was fully equipped to examine and report upon its condition and advantages. He succeeded in exploring the Bay of Natal and visiting Dingaan in his chief town of Umkongloof, and the accounts which he brought back first attracted the attention of the Dutch farmers to this district with a view to occupying the same. They quietly collected fourteen waggons, and a party headed by Piet Uys, Cobus Uys, Hans de Lange, Stephanus Maritz, and Gert Rudolph, started from Uitenhage in the beginning of the year 1834, taking

the lower route along the eastern slopes of the Quathlamba or Drakensberg range, following nearly in the same track by which Dr. Smith and his party had explored this district. Their arrival agreeably surprised the small party of English who had settled themselves down at the Bay, where Messrs. Ogle, Toohey, and King (who are now amongst us, and the only survivors of those settlers) gave them a hearty reception, from whose accounts, and from their own explorations of the country, they soon came to the conclusion that this would be a country in every way suited to them and their countrymen; they loitered here some time, shooting and examining the country, and would have pursued their explorations still further if they had not been suddenly startled by the astounding intelligence that the Kafirs had made a sudden general irruption into the eastern province, and thus provoked a third Kafir war.

This compelled them to beat a hasty retreat, and they most providentially succeeded in returning unattacked through the whole of Kafirland, while the Kafirs, having deserted their own country, appeared wholly intent upon laying waste the eastern districts of the colony.

Some of the details of that war, as bearing directly upon the emigrant farmers, and their reasons for final expatriation in large bodies, must, however, be reserved for a future lecture, as I fear I have already too long trespassed upon your time and patience;

but in the next I hope I shall be able to conclude in setting them down in this district, and showing how they ultimately succeeded in attaining that object.

“Per varios casus et tot discrimina rerum.”

“Through such varieties of woe they tend  
T’wards fair Natal, where all their toil shall end.”

## LECTURE III.

### SEEKING A NEW HOME

MY last lecture brought us to the first exploratory visit paid by a small party of Dutch farmers to Natal with a view of ascertaining its capabilities, and to the general state of the eastern frontier at the outbreak of the third general Kafir war of 1834. That year had been marked (as I have already said) by Sir Benjamin D'Urban (without compare the best Governor with which the Cape Colony has ever been favoured) having assumed the government of the country. Two very serious duties were, however, demanded from him immediately upon his taking the administration of the government: the one was to organise and set in operation a Legislative Council, which was then just granted to the colony, as a stepping-stone towards more liberal political institutions; the next was to enact various laws and regulations, incident on the abolition of slavery and the transition of all the slave population into a class of apprentices for a limited period. It will be easily understood that the time of a Governor who read attentively every paper

that was transmitted to the Colonial Office, and who generally drew out every document emanating therefrom, must have been fully engrossed with these two important duties; and during that period (I am personally aware) his mind was much harassed by the most conflicting accounts he received as to the state of the frontier and our relations with the Kafir tribes.

The leading practical men about the frontier, and the public press at Graham's Town, represented that frontier as in a very alarming and precarious position, and that the Kafirs were undisguisedly evincing a very hostile feeling; while a party in Cape Town, under the influence of the Rev. Dr. Philip and of the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser* newspaper, represented them as peaceably inclined, and ready to enter into any arrangements based on the principles of justice and fairness, ascribing all the alarming accounts received from the frontier not only to fear, but to the base and unworthy motive of trying only thereby to have a strong military force, and consequent large expenditure, kept up in that province; and the contemptuous view taken by that party of the representations, both of the colonists and the former Government, as to the insecurity of that part of the colony, cannot be better shown than by quoting the following passage from one of the numbers of the *Commercial Advertiser*, published a short time before the arrival of Sir Benjamin D'Urban in the Cape Colony, to this effect:—

"The murders by Kafirs, of which the Colonial Government prate so fluently, are to be found only on the lips of lying men or in the imagination of the timid Cockneys and pin-makers who shrink from the bold eyes of a natural man.

"We cannot, however, allow a single day to elapse without declaring that the alarm expressed with regard to these people (the Kafirs) have no foundation, that the accusations brought against them were false, and that the clamour (we feel convinced) was raised for the purpose of concealing a system and series of frauds practised by some of the white English inhabitants against and upon these people.

"When Government hear of any outcry they have only to give a gentle hint that Dr. Philip, or the editor of this paper, are about to make a tour in that direction, and iniquity will hide its head, sin will be felled like an ox, and all the enemies of righteousness will be scattered like sheep!"

With opinions so directly opposed to each other, it is not at all surprising that Sir Benjamin D'Urban should have determined to try, at least in the first instance, the policy advocated by those inclined towards peace and amity with the Kafirs, and he accordingly availed himself of the very person thus held out as able to "scatter the enemies of righteousness like sheep," and authorised Dr. Philip (who was going to visit the Kat River Settlements and the London Missionary Institutions on the frontier) to court a conference with the principal Kafir chiefs; to announce to them his Excellency's friendly disposition towards them, and his anxious desire to

settle personally and permanently with them the future relations which were to be kept up between the two countries. The reports which his Excellency received during the middle of that year from this and other quarters led him still more to hope that peace would not be disturbed until he had personally visited the frontier, and towards the end of that year I accompanied our worthy Chief Justice, Sir John Wylde, on circuit, when, after the court business at Graham's Town was ended, we were led to anticipate a friendly intercourse with the chiefs Macomo and Tjalee at the Chumie, where Colonel Somerset had given them an intimation of his and our visit. But the reception which we received was marked with such a spirit of hostility, as compelled the Rev. Mr. Chalmers himself to admit that the behaviour of the whole of the clans around him had assumed so decidedly hostile an appearance as to render it necessary for the public functionaries to be prepared for some general outbreak; and on our return to Cape Town, at a numerous convivial meeting, to which Sir Benjamin had invited myself and family on New Year's Eve, I could not help dilating somewhat at length on the hostile disposition of these tribes, to which His Excellency appeared to listen with particular interest; but nothing else indicated the slightest disturbance in society, except (what was only remembered afterwards by some of us) that Sir Benjamin had occasionally absented him-

self for a few minutes from the party. Good humour and hilarity prevailed until we had hailed in the new year, when every one gradually retired to their homes; but on the next morning, on returning to town, I found the astounding intelligence universally spread abroad that the evening before His Excellency had received the account that the Kafirs, to the number of 12,000 or 15,000 men, had invaded the whole frontier from every quarter on Christmas Day, burning and destroying every farmhouse, murdering the inhabitants, and carrying away all their cattle and property.

Still doubting this information, from the imperturbable good humour which had prevailed at Government House the night before, I could not resist applying personally in that quarter for information, and appealing to His Excellency as to the truth of that report. He, in his wonted gentle and yet firm manner, not only confirmed the report, but jocularly observed that he had received the sad intelligence while we were assembled there, but that he had done immediately all that could be done, and had not wished to disturb the harmony of the party by divulging such intelligence.

That night already all orders had been given to, despatch every disposable soldier; to call out all the burgher forces, and to send off Colonel Smith, the Quartermaster-General of the forces (and now our worthy Governor-in-Chief), who had started in the middle of the night, and in five days reached



Graham's Town, where he found everything in an indescribable state of panic and confusion.

This attack had been so little expected and provided against that a force of about 750 men, of all arms, spread in small parties over the whole eastern frontier, and from 1100 to 1200 men, constituted the whole military force in the colony.

All that Colonel Smith could consequently do at Graham's Town was to restore some confidence in the community, to organise some volunteer force on the spot, and to guard the few military posts, while another *levée en masse* of all the young and able-bodied farmers throughout the colony was again called out, and those who did not fall within that "conscription" were still required to furnish horses, cattle, waggons, supplies of food and the like, upon a vague promise of being afterwards indemnified; and in this manner a very respectable force marched immediately from every district of the colony, fully equipped by their own relatives and friends. And chiefly with this force, animated by the greatest enthusiasm, and aided by one or two regiments, which subsequently reached the colony, Sir Benjamin D'Urban was enabled not only to expel the Kafirs again out of the colony, but to drive them across the Kye, where, after the death of Hintza, he succeeded in dictating the terms of their surrender, and to lay down the basis of what was fondly hoped would secure the permanent peace and tranquillity of the frontier.

It is not my purpose, nor does it belong to the object of these lectures, to enter into a detail of the military or political arrangements effected by that excellent Governor.\* It will suffice to state that chiefly owing to the exertions of the burghers, and the spirit in which they were led by Col. Smith, the whole of Kaffraria up to the Kye was completely cleared of the Kafirs, and Sir Benjamin dictated at last to them the terms upon which he would accept their submission.

His plan (I have reason to know) was at that time to give out all the lands between the Fish River and the Keiskamma (or what was already known as the ceded or neutral territory) to such inhabitants as had suffered most of the Kafir war, or to additional

\* I cannot resist the pleasure of here introducing the noble and generous sentiments lately expressed by Sir George Napier (the Governor of the Cape Colony, who had been sent to supersede Sir Benjamin D'Urban, and to introduce an entirely new system in our relations with the Kafirs) in his examination before the House of Commons, viz. —To the question put by Mr Hawes (question 1600). Are you, or are you not, disposed to think that, taking a certain military possession of Kafirland beyond the boundary of the Keiskamma—that is to say, establishing military posts there, as has been done by Sir Harry Smith, with the concurrence both of Sir Henry Pottinger and Sir Peregrine Maitland—has been so far successful that it has prevented an irruption of the Kafirs into the colony proper? Answer. I think certainly it has. I went out, if I had any prejudice at all, with a prejudice against the colonists, and against that former occupation of the ground by Sir Benjamin D'Urban and Sir Harry Smith, and thinking that it would be better not to have them. My own experience and what I saw with my own eyes have confirmed me that I was wrong, and that Sir Benjamin D'Urban was perfectly right; that if he meant to keep Kafirland under British rule the only way of doing

emigrants or discharged soldiers and officers; to give out these lands under the express condition of personal occupation, and thus to form a belt of a dense European population in advance of the Fish River fastnesses. He intended further to allocate the country between the Keiskamma and the Kye among such of the Kafirs as had submitted, but to keep over them an efficient military force and a magisterial control; and he intended still further to urge upon the Local Legislature and the Home Government to compensate liberally, if not fully, all those who had been *bond fide* sufferers in the war.

These losses had been inquired into with the greatest care and minuteness, and the official returns showed that those sustained on the immediate frontier amounted to:—

456 farmhouses burnt and totally destroyed.

350 others partially pillaged and gutted.

60 waggons captured by the Kafirs and destroyed.

5,715 horses,	} taken and	
111,930 head of horned cattle, and		} irrecoverably
161,930 sheep,		
amounting in value to upwards of £300,000, independent of the losses by persons who contributed to the outfitting of the various "commandos" from each district.		

A few thousand recaptured cattle were, however,

so was by having a line of forts and maintaining troops in them. No doubt it must be so, and if all those forts were well garrisoned and provisioned it would answer very well.

all the trophies of the war, and the feelings of the inhabitants may easily be guessed at when amongst these many breeding cattle and entire spans of oxen were recognised by their former owners, but who upon reclaiming them were told that they could not be surrendered, as they were to be publicly sold in order to compensate for part of the expenses of war, but that "they" were hereafter to get ample compensation. But what were their feelings, and those of their gallant commander, when, after having suffered these losses and encountered the dangers of a most harassing war of fifteen months' duration, a despatch was received from the then Secretary of the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, dated 26th December, 1835 (which had been immediately published by the home authorities through the Blue Book), containing the most unreserved condemnation of the whole policy and operations of the war, abusing in unmeasured language the barbarous manner in which (the Secretary of State asserted) the war had been conducted, and concluding with the following extraordinary declaration (as emanating from His Majesty's Government) touching the justice of the war, viz. :—

"Through a long series of years the Kafirs had an ample justification of war ; they had to resent, and endeavoured justly, though impotently, to avenge a series of encroachments ; they had a perfect right to hazard the experiment, however hopelessly, of extorting by force that redress which they could not otherwise obtain ; and that the

original justice is on the side of the conquered (the Kafirs), and not (of) the victorious party!!”

A communication more cruel, unjust, and insulting to the feelings—not only of the commander, who, wholly intent upon the most pacific and conciliatory measures with the Kafirs, had been suddenly attacked and seen the country placed under his authority and protection invaded, but of the inhabitants, who had not only been engaged in a twelve months' warfare of the most harassing and dangerous character, but who were smarting from a system pursued during *fourteen* years by the local Government never affording them redress for their most serious losses and grievances on this subject—can hardly have been penned by a declared enemy of the country and its Governor; and it at once opened the eyes of the colonists to what they had long suspected, viz., that in the estimation of his then Majesty's Government they were marked as the aggressors in the war and the oppressors of the Kafir race; that the latter, and not “they,” were entitled to sympathy and relief. And that they were not wrong in these conclusions soon became still more apparent, upon their being informed that all their applications for indemnity for the losses they had sustained were rejected; that all the grants of land about to be made to persons, even within the country ceded to the Government ever since the year 1817, were to be revoked and cancelled, and that the Kafirs were to be fully reinstated in the

possession of all the lands which by the terms of the treaty of September, 1835, they had formally ceded to His Majesty, his heirs and successors for ever ; and moreover, when they heard that a Lieut.-Governor had been appointed, whose opinions (as publicly expressed in his examination before a Committee of the House of Commons on the line of policy to be observed towards the Kafirs) seemed at least to hold out the prospect that these views of His Majesty's Government would be carried out to the letter.

To expect that an entire population thus insulted and injured should still continue loyally and well-affected towards the Government was as impossible as to expect "that of thorns men should gather figs, or that of a bramble-bush they should gather grapes."

From that moment, then, the farmers throughout the eastern province saw that the whole Hottentot race, who had been their former prædial servants, had been withdrawn from them, and were fast assuming a certain "nationality" within the colony. They had had the few slaves they possessed taken from them at a ridiculous compensation, which several had refused to accept ; and they now lastly found their houses and farms burnt and destroyed, their stocks and herds taken from them, without a chance of redress or indemnity ; and from the policy at once laid down by the Home Government they further clearly saw that their lives and future pro-

perties would for ever be endangered, and that even the day of their again recovering their former wealth would as certainly be marked by another irruption and the sweeping away of their newly-acquired herds, as effects must follow causes.

From that moment, therefore, it may be said that the determination to quit the land of their fathers became general and universal, and the leading families in the Oliphant's Hoek, Gamtoos River, along the Fish River, and Somerset, forming themselves into little knots, at once prepared for this "Exodus," although there were, no doubt, some persons or families, who joined this emigration, who had also some private or personal cause for thus expatriating, as, for instance, the Greylings, for having been indicted and severely mulcted at the Circuit Court at Uitenhage for contravening the ordinance for the abolition of slavery; W. S. van der Merwe, for having a personal quarrel with the civil commissioner of his district; the late unfortunate Retief, for having been insulted (as he conceived) by the Lieutenant-Governor of the eastern province; and Piet Uys, on account of his wife having been committed, in his absence, by virtue of a warrant of a local magistrate, and taken before him in custody as a prisoner. Yet these were but "drops" in the ocean of emigration, an ocean which, from that moment, began irresistibly to flow into the interior of Africa, and from thence into Natal.

The beginning of the year 1836 was marked by all the farms of those intending emigrants getting into the market. They were readily bought up by numerous speculators at Graham's Town, Somerset, and adjoining places for ridiculously low prices, and everything showed a settled determination to carry out this expatriation on an extensive scale. The local Government did all they could "indirectly," through the magistracy and the clergy, to point out the illegality and dangers of such a step; rumours were indirectly spread that the Government could enforce the provisions of an English writ of *Ne exeat Regno* to prevent this emigration, and for a moment some little hesitation was apparent in their movements, but a reply of the new Lieutenant-Governor, Stockenström, to an address from the inhabitants of Uitenhage, in August, 1836, upon his assuming his government, soon removed all doubt on that subject, for in that reply he made use of these remarkable words :—

"It is but candid at once to state that I am not aware of any law which prevents any of His Majesty's subjects from leaving his dominions and settling in another country, and such a law, if it did exist, would be tyrannical and oppressive !"

This unreserved, though perhaps injudicious, expression of his opinion at once settled all their doubts, and soon after this the first party, of about 200 persons, headed by Hendrik Potgieter, crossed



the Orange River.\* Bidding for ever farewell to the Cape Colony they advanced to Thaba 'Nchu, where the Barolong chief, Moroko (who at that time was under the spiritual direction of one whom I am happy to see sitting near me, as a member of this society, the Rev. Mr. Archbell), gave them a most friendly reception, where they obtained every facility in depasturing their cattle.

These were soon followed by a more numerous and wealthy party from Graaff-Reinet, headed by Gert Maritz, and these were again succeeded by other large parties from the Uitenhage and Albany divisions, headed by the old patriarch, Jacobus Uys, by Carl Landman, Gert Rudolph, and others.

Their numbers thus fast increasing in the Barolong territory soon gave rise to divisions, and the older emigrants, making way for the later arrivals, advanced gradually along the banks of the Vaal River (or Ky Gariep), in a northerly direction, until they came into contact with the numerous and powerful tribe of the Matabelee under Mazulekatze.

It is supposed that this sanguinary chieftain, having been frequently attacked by the Zulu and Griqua forces in that direction, was always particularly jealous of any approach from that quarter. But the farmers, of course, unaware of this disposition, con-

\* A small party, headed by Carel Trieckard, had preceded these, and they advanced as far as Delagoa Bay, but were seized with the coast fever, and only two survived of that whole party, who got back to this district two years after, and are now still residing here.

tinued gradually to move onwards, quite unsuspecting of danger, when their advanced party was suddenly attacked, and twenty-eight of their number barbarously murdered. After this partial success the Matabelee attacked another small party, equally advancing at a little distance from the former, and these, also being totally unprepared, were unable to offer any effectual resistance, and some twenty-five men and women were also massacred, and their waggons and properties destroyed and plundered; but a few of their party fortunately escaped to warn the numerous little parties, who were still spread about those vast plains, of the impending danger. They had scarcely collected themselves in a "laager"\* of about fifty waggons when they were attacked by the whole army of the Matabelee, who rushed in upon them, endeavouring to force themselves through the waggons, and a most desperate struggle ensued, in which the Matabelee were, however, finally repulsed, but not without sweeping away the whole of the cattle belonging to the emigrant farmers, which they had been unable to get within the en-

\* These "laagers," or camps, were formed by their waggons being brought up in a square, the poles and waggon "gear" of one waggon being firmly secured under the "perch" of the next waggon; and when time admitted branches of the thorny mimosas were also wattled in under each waggon, so that no entrance could be effected into the enclosure without forcibly tearing up all these impediments. It is clear that where the number of waggons collected is not great the square formed by these waggons is so small that they could barely secure their persons and families within the enclosure, leaving the cattle outside.

campment; and the Matabelee succeeded in thus carrying away 6000 head of cattle and upwards of 40,000 sheep as a poor compensation for the loss of the lives of their best warriors.

From these repeated and desperate attacks it was evident that the emigrants had encountered a most formidable enemy in that quarter, and that all hopes of a peaceable advance in that direction had to be abandoned; but the loss of their cattle prevented them from either advancing or retreating until some messengers, whom they had despatched to Thaba 'Nchu, succeeded in reaching that place and acquainting Moroko and the Rev. Mr. Archbell with their precarious situation. These persons generously procured and despatched a sufficient number of oxen to their encampment, from whence they thus effected their retreat, and returned in safety to Moroko's residence.

Upon bringing this account of their disasters and losses to their fellow-countrymen the more numerous and powerful clans, which had remained peaceably concentrated about Thaba 'Nchu, resolved to take ample revenge for these murders and to recover the cattle stolen from their countrymen, and a party of about 200 warriors, headed by Gerrit Maritz, crossed the Vaal River,\* and making a flank movement across

\* The Vaal, or Yellow River, by the natives called Ky Gariep, derives its name from the discoloured nature of its stream. It forms at present the northern boundary of the Sovereignty district, and is likely to acquire some celebrity by the recent treaty concluded, by

his western boundaries, attacked one of Mazulekatzes' principal military towns, named Mosega, where they killed several hundreds of his principal warriors, and recovered about 7000 head of cattle, together with the waggons which the Matabelee had taken to that town in triumph, after the attacks they had made upon the first small parties which had incautiously advanced into their territories.

Shortly after their return from this successful retaliation, and while they were discussing their future plans, disunion and rivalry among their leaders were again beginning to show themselves, when the ill-fated Pieter Retief joined them with a small party, and his name and character (while one of the "commandants" appointed by the Government of the eastern frontier) stood deservedly so high that by one consent he was chosen to be their "commandant-general," to whom all the parties, then in those regions, gave in their willing submission.

A few details of the life and history of this first great "martyr" in the settlement of this district may not prove uninteresting.

Descended from one of those French Protestant families which found refuge in the Cape Colony on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, his grandparents had obtained a plot of freehold land in the

<sup>1</sup> having been fixed by the Assistant Commissioners with the Transvaal farmers, as the permanent line of demarcation between Her Majesty's subjects and those to whom (it is said) entire independence has been promised.

beautiful glen of Waggonmakers' Valley, near the Paarl, where both soil and climate had marked the spot as favourable to the cultivation of the orange and the vine, and there his father enjoyed a respectable living by the annual sale of some millions of oranges and a considerable vintage.

Pieter Retief was there born, and brought up by his father with a view to continue that easy and profitable living; but his active and restless disposition led him, as he advanced to manhood, to emancipate himself from the mere drudgery of this rural life, and he first commenced by carrying on some trade with the interior, when the arrival of the first British emigrants into the eastern province in 1820 drew his attention to that part of the colony. The Government requiring some person of activity and means to contract for some time to supply these emigrants with certain allowances and rations until they had been able to provide for their own subsistence, he was introduced and recommended to the Government by my deceased parent as a fit and proper person for that purpose, who, moreover, became his surety for the due and faithful discharge of his contract. This caused his settling down on the frontier, where his attention to his contract, and his liberality of conduct, ingratiated him with the settlers, and established that good feeling which ever afterwards prevailed between them.

After the contract for the supply of these emigrants had ceased he engaged in large contracts for erecting

public buildings for the Government, and at first amassed a very respectable fortune; but the failure of some of his sub-contractors, and the number of his various avocations, afterwards involved him in serious pecuniary difficulties. But this did not in any way affect the estimation in which he was held, both by the community and the Government, having been appointed one of the "commandants" on the frontier, a situation which, although of a somewhat anomalous character, was generally given to persons who, as field-cornets, had rendered faithful services to the country, and was always considered to give the incumbent some kind of magisterial authority in his district. Having returned to his farm, and being altogether engaged in agricultural pursuits in 1834, he had been a very serious loser in the Kafir war which then broke out; and after the peace, which had been concluded towards the end of the year 1835, he saw with dread and fear a system (if not encouraged, at least) marked out by the local authorities of allowing Kafirs again to pass through and congregate at whatever places they thought fit within the colony. He not only strongly opposed this, but apprehended such roving Kafirs and Hottentots wherever he found them lurking about, and whenever they were unable to give an account of themselves. But in sending these persons in custody to the nearest magistrate he found that they were not only immediately liberated, but he was officially censured for taking up persons not

*actually* apprehended in the commission of crime. He soon saw, from the tone thus assumed by the authorities, that there was no longer hope for the security of property along the frontier, and he determined accordingly to follow the example set by the first migrating farmers. He also joined in some addresses, presented to the newly-appointed Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andries Stockenstrom, complaining of this state of insecurity, which led to a not very dignified correspondence between them, in which the Lieutenant-Governor charged him with misleading others, and threatened him with dismissal from his "purely honorary" situation of commandant. These threats, and the system which he thus clearly saw was about to be again enforced, and which in his opinion (fully confirmed by consequent events) would again expose the frontier to harassing forays, and ultimately to another general war, induced him to sell off all he possessed, and to combine with a few neighbours, with whom (as I have before stated) he joined the emigrant farmers, shortly after Gert Maritz had returned from his successful attack upon Mazulekatze and the Matabelee.

Having now been unanimously elected their commandant-general, Retief immediately set about forming regular treaties of friendship and alliance with all the native chiefs by whom he was surrounded except Mazulekatze. Moroko, Mosesh, Tonana, and Sikon-yella entered apparently with cordiality into all his arrangements; and upon this footing all the emigrants

spread themselves over the lands situated between and along the Modder, the Vet, and the Sand Rivers, and gradually formed themselves into a more settled form of government. Their numbers were about that time also increased by another large clan, headed by the venerable patriarch Jacobus Uys, then about seventy years of age, and his eldest son, Pieter Uys, who, having already visited this district before, cherished the idea of settling down here in preference to going further into the interior of Africa. This party issued a manifesto declaratory of their intention to shape their course towards Natal, and to secede from all those parties who seemed more intent to occupy the banks of the Vaal River, or what is now called the Sovereignty, and even to proceed eastward to Delagoa Bay. This determination of the clans of Uys, Moolman, and Potgieter seems to have induced Retief also to follow their track, and he sent exploring parties from the Sand River, who at length succeeded in finding two or three paths across the Quathlamba or Draaksberg, which might easily be made passable for waggons; for up to that time every attempt to cross that mountain range by waggons from the Zuurberg to the west up to the Olivier's Pass, at the extreme north-east extremity of our district, had failed.

Retief succeeded with his party in crossing at one spot and reached Port Natal in safety, where he met with a hearty reception from the British emigrants, who (strange to say) had also formed themselves into



a little independent community; for, upon Captain Gardiner, of the navy, arriving among them and asserting a magisterial authority over them, under the provisions of an extraordinary law passed by the British legislature, and entitled "the Cape of Good Hope Punishment Bill," which he promulgated among them, they at once repudiated his interference and maintained their independence from all authority except from such as would emanate from themselves, in consequence of the then Secretary for the Colonies, Lord Glenelg, having expressly "disclaimed in the most distinct terms any intention on the part of His Majesty's Government to assert any authority over any part of this territory." This mutual feeling of independence seemed to serve as a bond of union between them; and there can be no doubt that if a person like Retief had continued to be the acknowledged head of the Dutch emigrants, that a more firm and lasting tie would have bound them together.

Pieter Retief, however, in the conscientious view which he had always taken of these matters, felt that as both Chaka and Dingaan had nominally given away this territory to various other persons before his arrival, and that the occupation of this country by him and his followers might thereafter subject them to disputes, either with the Zoolah chiefs or with such English emigrants as had received such ill-defined grants from the Zoolah sovereigns, he determined to proceed in person to Dingaan's capital to

negotiate with him a treaty of peace, and obtain a formal cession of such extent of territory as the latter might feel inclined to cede to him and the emigrant farmers. Upon reaching the Zoolah chief's capital, "Umkongloof," he accidentally found there a missionary of the Church of England (the Rev. F. Owen), who materially assisted in apparently disposing the chief to give him a kind reception; and upon being made acquainted with the special object of Retief's mission, he at once promised him a formal cession of this territory upon his first recovering back for him a quantity of cattle which Sikonyella, a Mantatee chief, residing on the sources of the Caledon River, had recently taken from him. Retief accepted these terms, and returning to this district at once called together several of the parties who were preparing to settle down in this territory. They determined upon an attack on Sikonyella, but before doing so sent messengers to him demanding restitution, with a significant notice that it would be enforced; and this communication had the desired effect, for Sikonyella immediately gave up 700 head of cattle, together with sixty horses and some guns, which he and his tribe had at various times captured from small immigrating parties of farmers.

During these proceedings, which took place during the last months of the year 1837, nearly 1000 waggons had already descended and passed down the slopes of the Draaksberg into this district; and the emigrant farmers finding the country entirely denuded of all

population (with the single exception of one small party under the chief Matuan, who now still occupies nearly the same ground), they spread themselves over the whole of the Klip River division down to the Bushman's River, where the remains of thousands of stone kraals clearly indicated that a very dense population must have once been settled down ; thus also giving a promise of the great fertility of the soil, as it could not otherwise have maintained so large a population.

Upon Retief's return to that part of this district, on his way to Dingaan with the cattle surrendered by Sikonyella, to be delivered to the former, a sad presentiment seems to have come over many of the heads of the parties, who, however, then still acknowledged Retief as their leader. Gerit Maritz proposed that he should proceed to Dingaan with the cattle recovered, taking only three or four men with him, arguing, very justly, that the insignificance of such a force would be its best safeguard. But Retief appeared to have desired to show Dingaan something like a respectable force, and insisted upon taking some forty or fifty of his best horsemen with him, leaving it, however, optional to any person to accompany him or to remain behind. This only induced an additional number of spirited young men to join, and during the last week in January, 1838, Pieter Retief, accompanied by seventy of the most respectable and picked men from among the emigrants, with about thirty young Hottentots and

servants riding or leading their spare horses, formed an imposing cavalcade, with which he crossed the Umzinjaate (or Buffalo River), and on the 2nd of February arrived at Umkongloof (Dingaan's capital), and delivered over the cattle recovered from Sikonyella, with the receipt of which Dingaan expressed himself highly satisfied; and having collected several of his regiments from the neighbouring kraals, he entertained them for two days with their favourite sham-fights, which give a fearful representation of their mode of warfare. Dingaan had fixed the 4th of February for signing a formal cession of the whole of this district to Pieter Retief, for himself and the emigrant farmers for ever; and the Rev. Mr. Owen, still then residing with Dingaan, was requested to draw out and witness the instrument, which he accordingly did in English, and to this document Dingaan and some of his principal councillors affixed their marks, after the tenor thereof had been fully interpreted to them by the Rev. Mr. Owen. Retief's business being thus satisfactorily ended he made his arrangements to depart the next morning, when Dingaan desired him to enter his kraal once more to take leave of him, requesting, however, that his party should not enter armed, as this was contrary to their usage; and this Retief unguardedly did, leaving all their arms piled up outside of the kraal, while they sent their "achter ryders" to fetch and saddle their horses. Upon approaching Dingaan in his kraal they found him surrounded (as usual) by two

or three of his favourite regiments, when, after conversing with Retief and some of his leading men in the most friendly manner, he pressed them to sit down a little longer, offering them their "stirrup cup," in some "chuallah," or maize beer, which the Kafirs enjoy as a favourite beverage. This was handed round to the whole party, who partook freely thereof, and while a number of them were thus sitting down, with the bowls in their hands, Dingaan suddenly exclaimed, "Bulala matagati," or "Kill the wizards," and in an instant 3000 or 4000 Zoolahs assailed them with their knobkerries; and although many of the farmers, instantly drawing their clasp knives (which they usually carry by them and use in cutting up the game they kill or the viands they eat), made a determined resistance, and took the lives of several of their assailants, yet they soon fell, one after the other, under the overwhelming pressure of the thousands by whom they were charged and beaten down; and after a desperate struggle of half an hour's duration their expiring and mangled corpses were dragged out of the kraal to an adjoining hillock, marked and infamous as the "Aceldama," or rather the "Golgotha," where the bones of all victims to the fury of this despot were hoarded up, and became a prey to the wolves and vultures.

Dingaan, following the precept of Cæsar, who deemed nothing done so long as anything remained undone, ordered instantly ten of his regiments to march into this territory to attack all the emigrant

farmers (who, in perfect security, were spread all over the district, awaiting the return of their friends) and exterminate them, root and branch. It certainly is remarkable that the doubts which the majority had entertained as to the good faith of Dingaan vanished so soon after the departure of Retief and his party: the young men were enjoying the pleasures of the chase, and supplying their friends with the game that abounded, and the women, seemingly also unsuspecting, were only awaiting the return of their husbands, sons, and relatives, when the Zoolah army, having divided itself into several small detachments, fell, at break of day, on the foremost parties of emigrants near the Blue Krans River, and close to the present township of Weenen, which has obtained its name (meaning wailing or weeping) from the sad events of that day. Men, women, and children were at once surrounded and barbarously murdered, with horrors which I should be sorry to dwell upon and detail; other detachments of Zoolahs surprised in other places similar small parties, who were likewise scattered all over the Klip River Division, and who all fell under the Zoolah assegai; but from one or two waggons a solitary young man escaped, who, hastening to the parties whom he knew to be in the rear, at length succeeded in spreading the alarm among them, so that as the Zoolahs advanced further into the district two or three parties of farmers had been able hastily to collect a few waggons and arrange them into a "laager," or en-

campment, where they made their preparations to secure their families just in time before they were also attacked, and they thus succeeded in repelling the most daring attacks made upon them, not one of these "laagers" having been forced or penetrated by the Zoolahs. The latter, however, advanced still further southward, until they met a still stronger party of emigrants on the farm now called "Vecht Laager" (afterwards the property of Mr. Ogle), on the Bushman's River, where they sustained a very serious engagement, which lasted throughout the whole day, but where, when the farmers' ammunition was nearly exhausted, luckily their last shots from a three-pounder, which had been rigged to the back of one of their waggons, struck down some of the leading Zoolah chiefs, and forced them to a precipitate retreat.

The moment these attacks were thus repulsed the emigrant farmers sallied out from their "laagers" to rescue (if possible) any of their friends who had been in advance, and to ascertain the havoc which had been caused among them, when, upon reaching the stations which those had occupied, a scene of horror and misery was unfolded which no pen can describe. All the waggons had been demolished, the iron parts wrenched from them, and by their ruins lay the mangled corpses of men, women, and children, thrown on heaps and abandoned to the beasts of prey. Amongst these heaps, at the Blue Krans River, they found literally amongst the dead corpses

the bodies of two young females, about ten or twelve years of age, which still appeared to show some signs of vitality. The one was found pierced with nineteen, and the other with twenty-one stabs of the assegai, leaving every part of their little frames completely perforated, and every muscle or fibre lacerated. The one was named Johanna van der Merwe and the other Catharina Margaretha Prinslo; they were taken up and tended with the utmost care and (strange to say) lived for many years, the sole survivors of the immediate branches of those families; but they always remained perfect cripples, although one of them (still more strange to say) married, and was the mother of one or two children. But, with these solitary exceptions, all these small parties which had not been able to combine and concentrate themselves in "laagers" were utterly destroyed, and in one week, after the murder of Retief and his party, 600 more victims were thus immolated by the fury and treachery of Dingaan and his army.

The survivors in this fearful catastrophe, after recovering from the panic in which they had been thrown, resolved to avenge themselves for this dreadful loss.

The whole clan of Uys, which, from some little feeling of jealousy of Retief, had lagged behind on the Draaksberg (and had thus escaped this onslaught), on hearing of this destruction, came down into the Klip River with many other smaller parties



of farmers who were advancing towards this district, and their precarious situation was soon made known to the English party resident at the bay, when the latter determined upon a movement on Dingaan to support the cause of the emigrant farmers; but they being few in numbers took with them a body of 700 Zoolahs, 400 of whom were armed with guns, having learnt to use them in their hunts of the elephant and buffalo. This party, which placed itself under the command of Mr. R. Biggar, crossed the Tugela at its mouth, and advanced a few miles across that river, when they attacked and destroyed the town of Tatabasooke, while the Zulu forces hid themselves in the Matikoola and Imsimdoosa rivers; but advancing a little further they were suddenly surrounded, and attacked at break of day by three divisions of the Zoolah army. After a desperate and murderous engagement almost every European or man of colour belonging to the party here lost his life; a fearful number of the Zoolahs were also killed, but of the English population of the bay, R. Biggar, Blankenberg, Cane, Stubbs, Richard Wood, William Wood, Henry Batt, John Campbell, Thomas Campbell, and Thomas Carden successively fell, and only one or two Europeans succeeded in fighting their way through these masses to convey to the small party who had remained at the bay the sad result of this engagement. That portion of Dingaan's army followed up (as usual) their success, and advanced as far as the bay, but the

few English who had survived took refuge on board of the *Comet*, Captain Hadden, then luckily lying at anchor in the bay, when after sweeping away all the cattle this detachment of Dingaan's army retired again into the Zulu country.

Dingaan himself, with his principal forces, was, however, at this time still watching the Dutch emigrant farmers, who, having now collected about 400 fighting men in the Klip River Division, placed themselves under the command of Piet Uys and of Hendrik Potgieter, and advanced about the same time (in April, 1838) towards Umkongloof, Dingaan's capital, intent upon destroying it, and expelling Dingaan from the country.

This wily chieftain allowed the emigrant farmers to advance to within a few miles of his capital, where the approach to the town is closed in between two hills, and there the Zoolah forces first showed themselves, but gradually retiring, drew the emigrant farmers still further into this hollow way, when another division of the Zoolah forces emerging from behind one of these hills and cutting off all retreat, a desperate hand-to-hand fight ensued, the farmers being so hemmed in that they could not fire, then fall back rapidly on horseback, and again load and charge, as was their usual and efficient mode of warfare. They accordingly, as by one consent, directed all their fire on one mass of the Zoolahs, where their fatal aim having cleared a path by bringing down hundreds in this volley, they rushed

through and thus escaped, but their chief (and unquestionably most gallant commander), Piet Uys, having taken a somewhat different course in a country but little known to them, found himself surrounded with a small party of about twenty faithful followers and his favourite son, a young lad of twelve years of age, before a ravine, which their horses could not get over or clear.

Finding himself wounded, he called to his followers "to fight their way out," as he could not follow; all obeyed his command except his loving son, who remained by his father until both fell pierced with wounds. The remainder of their party, and the great majority of the emigrant farmers, having ultimately succeeded in thus fighting their way out of this trap which had so ably been laid for them, effected a retreat out of the country without any further great loss of life, leaving, however, the "prestige" of victory with the Zoolah chieftain, to whom the loss of several hundreds of his best warriors was always considered but of little moment, imparting only an exciting interest to his fiendish propensities and habits.

The emigrant farmers were, however, so disheartened by the result of their attack, and that of the English settlers from the bay upon Dingaan's forces, that they gave up all hope of resuming hostilities for the present. They had been taught a lesson of prudence by the talent and daring displayed by the Zoölah armies, and they accordingly

kept a watchful eye upon their northern frontier, and sent messengers out in various directions imploring further accession to their numbers, both from the Cape and the present Sovereignty. Many parties, upon hearing of their distressed state, came to join them, but this at the moment only increased their misery and wants, as their cattle and herds having been swept away (these being still in the hands of the Zoolahs), and having been prevented from cultivating any lands, they were exposed not only to the greatest want, but were actually in a state of famine, when some liberal-minded countrymen of theirs at the Cape, hearing of their distressed condition, sent them supplies of food, medicine, and other necessities of life, which helped them through the miseries of the winter of 1838, during which season want, disease, and famine stalked over the land, making fearful ravages among them.

Dingaan, ever watchful when to attack his foe with advantage, being fully informed of their wretched condition, made another attack upon them in August, 1838, but on this occasion the emigrant farmers (having their scouts always out to give them timely intimation of his advance) were everywhere prepared to give him a warm reception, and at every laager the Zoolah forces were driven back and defeated with great loss, only two or three lives having been lost among the emigrants during several successive engagements. But although Dingaan was thus defeated, the emigrant farmers were still con-

tending up to the close of that year with the greatest difficulties. Small parties were pouring in to join them, but bringing little effectual support, until the beginning of December, the season appearing propitious, and a number of young men having come in by the Sovereignty, 460 fighting and mounted men put themselves under the command of Andries Pretorius, who had also recently joined the emigrants, among whom (having formerly been a field-cornet in the Graaff-Reinet district) he had made himself extremely popular.

They were powerfully aided by the brave and sterling Carel Landman, who also joined them with all those emigrants who had already commenced settling themselves down near the bay, and these combined forces, profiting from the experience of the past, advanced with great caution, securing their position every evening, so that when they had nearly reached the Umslatoos River they were fully prepared, as on the earliest dawn of day on Sunday, the 16th December, 1838, the whole of Dingaan's forces, about 10,000 or 12,000 strong, attacked their position with a fury far exceeding all their former attacks. For three hours they continued rushing upon them, endeavouring to tear open all their defences and force the emigrant camp, until Pretorius, finding the Zoolah forces concentrating all their efforts upon one side of the camp, and their own ammunition nearly failing, he ordered 200 mounted men to sally forth out of one of the gates

at the rear of the line which the Zoolahs were attacking, and these mounted warriors, charging both flanks and pouring their deadly volleys upon the immense masses which were gathered together within a small space, at length beat them off with a fearful loss. The emigrants assert that nearly 3000 Zoolahs licked the dust before they retreated; and their defeat must have been complete, as Dingaan fled quite panic-stricken, set fire to the whole of his town of Umkongloof, and hid himself with the remnant of his force for a considerable time in the woods skirting the Umvaloos River.

The emigrants having had only three or four men killed and as many wounded in this decisive engagement (among the latter of whom was Pretorius himself), advanced upon the town of Umkongloof, which they still found partially burning, and on the awful hillock out of the town they beheld on one vast pile the bones and remains of Retief and his one hundred companions in arms, who, ten months before, had fallen victims to Dingaan's treachery, but whose deaths they were then in fact avenging. Many of the straps or riems by which they had been dragged to this place of slaughter were still found adhering to the bones of the legs and arms by which they had been drawn thither. The skulls were frightfully broken, exhibiting marks of the knobkerries and stones with which they had been fractured, and, singular to relate, the skeleton of their ill-fated leader, Retief, was recognised by a leathern

pouch or bandolier, which he had suspended from his shoulders, and in which he had deposited the deed or writing formally ceding this territory to the emigrant farmers, as written out by the Rev. Mr. Owen on the day previous to his massacre, and signed with the mark of Dingaan, by which he declared "to resign to Retief and his countrymen the place called Port Natal, together with all the land annexed, that is to say, from the Tugela to the Umzimvooboo River, and from the sea to the north, as far as the land may be useful and in my possession."

These are the very words of the original document, which was found still perfectly legible, and was delivered over to me by the Volksraad in the year 1843, and is now (or ought to be) among the archives of the Colonial Office here.

After decently interring the remains of their unfortunate countrymen, the emigrant farmers found that their horses and ammunition were ill-calculated to continue a harassing warfare upon Dingaan in his fastnesses, and they therefore resolved gradually to fall back, which they did with little loss, taking with them some 5000 head of cattle, which they distributed among themselves as the lawful and hard-earned trophies of this campaign.

On their return from this successful inroad they were not a little surprised to find that Sir George Napier (who had succeeded Sir Benjamin D'Urban in the government of the Cape Colony) had sent a

small detachment of Highlanders, under the command of Major Charters, to take possession of the Bay of Natal. This measure had been evidently taken, and in fact was acknowledged in a proclamation of the 14th November, 1838, to have emanated from a desire to "put an end to the unwarranted occupation of parts of the territories belonging to the natives by certain emigrants from the Cape Colony, being subjects of His Majesty," and that proclamation gave the officer commanding these forces the further power to "search for, seize, and retain in military possession all arms and munitions of war which, at the time of the seizure of Port Natal, shall be found in the possession of any of the inhabitants."

Major Charters returned immediately to the Cape, when the command of the detachment devolved on Captain Jarvis, of the 72nd Regiment, and from the vague and ill-defined nature of his instructions some serious difference, if not conflict, might have arisen between him and the emigrant farmers in regard to the authority and orders he had received to seize upon their gunpowder and ammunition; but the good sense and good feeling of that officer soon smoothed away every difficulty between them, and he delivered them up their gunpowder, which he had provisionally seized, upon their engaging not to use it in aggressive hostilities against the natives. The necessity of keeping and maintaining the detachment led to some regular demand for supplies,



which kept up a mutual interchange of wants, and the most friendly intercourse was ever afterwards maintained between them. In the meanwhile the emigrant farmers laid out this township of Pietermaritzburg and what is now called the town of D'Urban. Landdrosts were appointed to both townships; they established a more regular system of government, and with the able assistance of Mr. Boshof (the present Registrar of the Court), who about that time arrived in this district with his entire clan, various laws and regulations were framed, which gradually redeemed them from the state of anarchy into which they were fast falling. While the winter of 1839 was thus taken up by these duties and labours, Dingaan, somewhat recovering from the effects of his late defeat, commenced sending in some special messengers, first delivering up 316 horses, which he at various times had captured, and thereafter professing every disposition to enter into amicable arrangements with the emigrants. Their answer was plain and manly, that they would not enter into any treaty of peace with him unless ample restitution had been made of all their cattle and sheep, and until the value of their property taken or destroyed by him and the Zoolahs had been paid for. This led to frequent embassies, promises of restitution, and fixing places where some at least of the cattle and some guns were promised to be delivered; but the farmers soon discovered that these messages and promises were mere pretexts

to keep up a constant and regular "espionage" upon them, as one of these pretended messengers or spies being caught, admitted that he had been sent to report to Dingaan whether the farmers were gradually returning to their farms or whether they still kept near to their laagers, thus clearly showing that he only waited the opportunity to attempt another *razia* upon them. This naturally paralysed all their agricultural pursuits and prevented them from spreading themselves about to carry on their farming operations, as they were kept constantly on the alert; when, in the inscrutable decrees of Providence, one of those events was brought about for which they were quite unprepared, in which they were not even the chief agents, but which led to their undisputed possession of the whole territory of Natal.

There were only at that time two brothers remaining alive of Chaka and Dingaan: the elder Panda or Umpanda (as he is called by his subjects), and a young lad, Clu Clu, who was afterwards murdered by Panda (in the year 1843), on which occasion their "Aunt" Mawa, with a great number of Chaka's and Dingaan's old followers, fled into this country; and subsequently settled in this district, chiefly in the Umvooti and Inanda locations. Umpanda had just reached manhood, but brought up in the midst of debauchery and sensuality he was only known for his unwarlike habits, and became an object of derision to the warriors and of contempt to

Dingaan, who seemed for a time to give him full scope for the indulgence of his passions as most conducive to his own personal safety, while Dingaan's appetite for war was so insatiable that notwithstanding his signal defeat by the emigrant farmers in December last he had again mustered a strong army, with which he attacked Sapusa, but in which he was defeated with fearful loss.

It was, therefore, not unnatural that, even among the Zoolahs, a party was forming deprecating these murderous wars and apparently inclined to support Panda, with a view to bring about peace with the emigrants and the surrounding nations. From that moment Dingaan determined to watch the opportunity of murdering his brother; but it appears that, a hint of his intentions to this effect having transpired, Panda at once fled with a number of followers, and crossing the Tugela near its mouth, took possession of some lands near the Umvottee, and sent messengers requesting the support and protection of the emigrants. Some suspicion was at first entertained that this was but a deep-laid plot between him and Dingaan to inveigle them into the Zoolah country; but after repeated conferences, which were managed with great tact and ability by the Landdrost Roos of D'Urban, by G. Kemp, Moolman, Morewood, Breda, and several others, a formal treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded with him, by the terms of which the emigrant farmers pledged themselves to support and defend Panda, while he, on the

other hand, promised to support them in any attack upon Dingaan.

The beginning of the year 1840 being considered the best season for commencing offensive operations, the emigrant farmers again mustered a force of 400 mounted warriors, who, under the chief command of Andries Pretorius, joined Panda's army, about 4000 strong, and this combined force, in January, again entered the Zoolah country by the Sunday's River and Biggar's Mountain; but with proper caution the emigrants kept themselves at some distance from Panda's army, which, under the able guidance of Nonklass (who continued for many years to be Panda's chief counsellor and captain), seemed quite intent upon coming into action.

While this commando was preparing and mustering their forces in this town of Pietermaritzburg, one of Dingaan's principal messengers, Tamboosa, arrived at Pietermaritzburg with one of those specious messages and offers of peace. He was, however, seized, with his attendant Combizana, and, upon being rigidly questioned, frankly admitted that he had also been sent with a view of reporting to Dingaan the state of the combined army of emigrants and Zoolahs under Panda. The latter, evidently embittered against this person (one of Dingaan's principal counsellors), charged him with having been the chief cause of the murder of Retief and his party; that he had plotted and advised his (Panda's) death; and, in short, brought such a series of charges

against him that (contrary to every usage of civilised life) he was taken along with the army as a prisoner, until they reached the banks of the Buffalo or Umzimjaatee River, where a court-martial was formed, which, under the excited feelings of the occasion, soon passed a sentence of death upon the unfortunate prisoners, and which was carried into execution within a few hours after; Tamboosa not only nobly upbraiding his executioners with the violation of all usage towards messengers, even amongst savages, but, expressing his perfect readiness to die, he only implored (but in vain) mercy on behalf of his young attendant, who was only a camp follower, and had thus been but doing his duty in following his master.

This may be said to have been the only blot which *seriously reflected upon the conduct of the emigrant farmers in their several engagements with the Zoolahs*, for they otherwise constantly endeavoured to spare the women and children from massacre, and uniformly conducted their wars with as much discretion and prudence as bravery.

A few days after this sad execution the Zoolah army under Panda encountered that commanded by Dingaan, whereupon a desperate engagement ensued, in the course of which one or two of Dingaan's regiments went over in a body to Panda. This decided the fate of the day: two of Dingaan's regiments who fought bravely for him being totally destroyed, the battle ended in his total defeat and

flight. The emigrant farmers, not having been engaged in this action, followed up this success (as soon as they heard of it) with great vigour; they drove Dingaan over the Black Umvolos, and from thence still further to the banks of the Pongola, where, deserted by almost all his followers, he endeavoured with about 100 followers to find shelter amongst a small tribe living near Delagoa Bay, named the Amasuree, but who, it is supposed (for I believe there is no actually authentic account of his death), murdered him to ensure their own safety from his constant and fearful forays upon them and the adjacent tribes.

As, however, no doubt as to his death and the dispersion of all his army existed, the emigrant farmers assembled in great state on the banks of the Umvolos on the 14th February, 1840, and there, under the discharge of their guns, Andries Pretorius proclaimed Umpanda the sole and acknowledged king of the Zulus; and by a proclamation issued by him, and attested by the other commandants, they declared their sovereignty<sup>1</sup> to extend from the Umvolos Umfana, or the Black Umvolos, and the St. Lucia Bay, to the Umzimvooboo, or St. John's River; and in fact, by their proceedings of that day, assumed a certain authority, or sovereignty, over Umpanda himself, from whom they received, as their indemnity, 36,000 head of cattle, 14,000 of which were delivered to those farmers who, residing beyond the Draaksberg, had

only come in as allies to their friends, and the remaining 22,000 (or rather the sad remains of them, for very many were lost or embezzled on the way) were brought to the foot of the Zwart Kop, near Pietermaritzberg, where, at a spot still named the Deel Kraal,\* they were distributed among such farmers as belonged to this district, and had claims for losses sustained in the previous wars and engagements.

A few days before the emigrant farmers started on their last and crowning victory over Dingaan and his forces, Sir George Napier, having been ordered to send the 72nd Regiment home, and finding that the Secretary of State for the Colonies still continued little inclined to support his policy of occupying this district, sent a vessel to the bay with orders to Capt. Jarvis to embark with his whole detachment; on which occasion he addressed a letter to the Landdrost Roos, at D'Urban, which, after referring to some complaints of natives as to encroachments on their gardens, contained the following farewell address and peroration:—

“It now only remains for me, on taking my departure, to wish you one and all as a community every happiness, sincerely hoping that, aware of your strength, peace may be the object of your councils; justice, prudence, and moderation be the law of your actions; that your proceedings may

\* Anglice, *camp* for distributing or dividing.

be actuated by motives worthy of you as men and Christians, that hereafter your arrival may be hailed as a benefit; having enlightened ignorance, dispelled superstition, and caused crime, bloodshed, and oppression to cease, and that you may cultivate these beautiful regions in quiet and prosperity, ever regardful of the rights of the inhabitants whose country you have adopted, and whose home you have made your own!"

From these expressions, enunciated by the officer commanding the forces on the eve of his departure, and from the general tenor of the intelligence received by them at the time from the Cape, there can be no doubt that the emigrant farmers became then fully impressed that Her Majesty's Government had determined, by no consideration, to swerve from that line of policy which had already declared that nothing would induce Her Majesty to assert a sovereignty over these territories. They therefore conceived that by this act of abandonment of this territory by Her Majesty's forces, and by their recent conquest and installation of Panda, as a chief set up by themselves, they had become both *de facto* and *de jure* the undisputed rulers of the country. They saw themselves respected and dreaded by all the neighbouring tribes, every farmer now had the opportunity of sitting himself down "under his own vine, and under his own fig tree," none making him afraid; and there is further no doubt that if they (as a body) had possessed suffi-



cient intelligence to feel the exact position in which they were placed, Her Majesty's Government would thereupon have bestowed upon them all the advantages of self-government consistent with a mere acknowledgment of their allegiance to Her Majesty and her heirs.

We may, therefore, here conclude this lecture (which has brought them down to a quiet and undisturbed possession of this territory) by applying to them the lines of the Mantuan bard, where in his *Second Georgic* he says of the peasantry of his country—

“O Fortunatos nimium sua si bona norint,  
Agricolas !” etc., etc.

As the whole of this passage is so peculiarly apposite to the position in which these farmers found themselves placed at that time, I shall conclude with applying to them the following lines, as translated by Ring:—

“Blest is the life these rural swains pursue ;  
Blest ! ah, too blest ! if all their bliss they knew.  
To whom, remote from dangers and alarms,  
And from the clashing of discordant arms,  
When once their calm and easy toil is o'er,  
The bounteous earth pours forth her foodful store.  
What though no domes their portals open wide,  
To vomit forth a sycophantic tide ?  
What though no stately columns they behold ?  
Nor sculptured brass, nor garments wrought with gold ?  
What though their fleece no Tyrian purple soil,  
Nor Cassian odours paint their liquid oil ?

Yet life, to vain delusive joys unknown,  
And rest and safety, these are all their own.  
And various wealth, a farm, a peaceful cot,  
A crystal fountain and a cooling grot ;  
The low of oxen in the grassy glades,  
And soft repose beneath embowering shades :  
Nor open lawns are wanting for the chase,  
Nor woods to shelter all the savage race,  
Nor hardy youth to cultivate the soil,  
Content with little, and inured to toil,  
Nor sacred altars of the Powers above,  
Nor parents honoured by the sons they love."

In these lectures I have now imparted to you, ladies and gentlemen, a plain unvarnished statement of the chief causes which led to the estrangement of a large portion of our fellow-colonists from the Government, and to their abandonment of the land of their forefathers, to seek a home in the wilds of South Africa, and in this district.

In this statement my aim has been "nought to extenuate, nor to set down aught in malice," but to show that these emigrants (as a body) form a most respectable, powerful, and numerous body of men, who, neither allured by the thirst after gold, nor the desire to exterminate savage tribes, only sought for a country which they endeavoured lawfully to acquire, where they might set themselves down in peace, secure as to their lives and properties.

This object they had fully gained, and if their true position had been well understood by them-

selves, and appreciated by the Government, nothing ought to have occurred subsequently to disturb the friendly harmony between them and a government to whom the golden rule becomes daily more self-evident—

“*Salus Populi Suprema Lex!*”

## LECTURE IV.

### THE BOERS IN NATAL

I WAS induced in the year 1852 to deliver a series of lectures containing a succinct, but (in accordance with my pledge) a truthful and impartial account of the causes which led a number of Boers to leave the land of their birth and to wander through the wild wastes of South-Eastern Africa, until they acquired a peaceful and independent settlement in this promising country.

My principal motive for consenting to deliver those lectures was (as announced by me at the time) to dispel the clouds which ignorance and misrepresentation were then but too rapidly accumulating around the British immigrants, who had been previously attracted hither by the delusive scheme of Mr. Byrne, and which were even of a nature to affect the friendly relations which should ever exist, for the good of all, between those races who have now virtually made this country their home.

It is remarkable, that in the very first Blue Book on Natal, published by order of the House of

Commons (a publication to which we generally refer for correct official information), the name of my respected and worthy brother, Colonel (now Sir Josias) Cloete, appears in several places, either through a misprint or misapprehension arising in the Colonial Office itself, as that of the Commissioner appointed to adjust the affairs of this district—a circumstance which has (I know) misled several persons into the belief that he at one time held that office in conjunction with the post of commander of Her Majesty's forces, sent to relieve a detachment which had arrived here under the command of Captain Smith.\*

The great and final triumph of the emigrant farmers over the power of Dingaan, his death, and the subsequent installation of Panda as the paramount chief of the Zoolah nation, under their auspices, appeared to me to constitute an appropriate conclusion to that course of lectures, as I was not unmindful of the warning ("not to follow contem-

\* At the time of delivering this lecture, I had not seen the Rev. Mr. Holden's recently published work on "Natal," in which (at page 191) I find that the author has fallen precisely into this error, and has adopted the "misprint" of the Blue Book published in 1846, by gravely announcing that "*Colonel Cloete*" had been appointed a "*Special Commissioner*" by Her Majesty, in the year 1843, to adjust the claims to land at Natal (vide pages 191 and 195), although the author seems to have had before him the "reprint" of official papers relating to Natal, edited by Mr. J. C. Chase, in which he would have found (in vol. 2, page 281) the official announcement of the "Hon'ble Henry Cloete, LL.D.," to that office, who is there described to be "an advocate of the Supreme Court, and a member of the Legislative Council of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope."

poraneous history too closely at her heels") left to future historians by Sir Walter Raleigh, who, in his quaint preface to his *History of the World*, accounts for his having confined himself so entirely to ancient history, in the following remarks—

"I know it will be said by many that I might have been more pleasing to the reader if I had written the story of mine own time; having been permitted to draw the water as near the well-head as another. To this I answer, that whosoever, in writing a modern history, shall follow truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth: there is no mistress or guide that hath led her followers and servants into greater miseries."

Following this sage advice, I allowed for a time "truth" to find its own way, and gradually to clear up the mists hanging over the modern history of this district; but I have since become more and more sensible of the painful fact that every succeeding day, and every ephemeral publication that has emanated from the press, have only added to the misrepresentations which ignorance or party spirit had originated. It therefore became a duty incumbent on those who were fully conversant with the correct details of affairs at the time, to inform the inhabitants of this district (upon good authority) of the manner in which those events had been gradually developed, terminating in a peaceable and unqualified submission to Her Majesty's authority, and thus introducing that settled government under

the protection of which we are at present assembled together.

Although these results were chiefly brought about by my own instrumentality, I trust I may now be allowed to refer to them without being justly chargeable with vanity or egotism, since such reference will be made merely for the purpose of vouching for the correctness of facts and occurrences of which I may truly say with the hero of the *Æneid*—

*“Quæque ipse miserrima vidi,  
Et quorum pars magna fui.”*

I stated in the conclusion of my third and last lecture of the former course that the 14th day of February, 1840, may be set down as the grand epoch whence the undisputed supremacy of the emigrant farmers over this country is to be dated. On that day, after the total defeat of Dingaan, and his flight to the Amazurees' country (where he was subsequently assassinated), Andries Pretorius, the commandant-general of the emigrant forces on the banks of the Umvolosi, formally installed Panda as the paramount king of the adjacent tribes, and (with the concurrence of some of the members of the Volksraad or Council of the People, who had accompanied him) issued the following proclamation:—

“I, Andries Wilhelmus Pretorius, chief commandant of all the burghers of the Right Worshipful Volksraad of the South African Society of Port Natal, and commander-in-chief of the army placed under my command, etc., etc.

"Whereas the Volksraad of the South African Society, on account of the unprovoked war which the Zoolah king or Zoolah nation has commenced against the South African Society, was compelled to incur an expense of Rds. 122,600 for horse and waggon-hire, and other expenses of war; and whereas the Zoolah king, according to all appearance and information, has deserted his territory and crossed the Pongola, etc., I do hereby proclaim and make known, that in the name of the said Volksraad of the South African Society, I seize all the land from the Tugala to the Umvaloos Umjana (the Black Umvaloos); and that our boundary shall in future be from the sea along the Black Umvaloos, where it runs through the Double Mountains, near to where it originates, and so along the Randberg (the Ridges), in the same direction to the Draaksberg (or Quathlamba) Mountains, including the St. Lucia Bay, as also all sea coasts and harbours which have already been discovered, or may hereafter be discovered, between the Umzimvubu and the Black Umvaloos mouths."

This proclamation was openly read, and its contents explained to Panda, who, with his chief counsellors, was present on the occasion; and under a discharge of twenty-one guns from their little field-piece (for they had but one), Panda was thus installed as chief of the Zoolah and other adjacent tribes, but holding that authority directly from the Emigrant Society, who thus became in fact his dominant and protecting power. Twenty thousand head of cattle were brought into this district as the spoils of that campaign, and the remnant of them (for a great proportion was purloined on the journey by the



dishonesty or negligence of the field-cornets and guard to whom they had been entrusted), was driven to an extensive grassy plateau, situate between the Zwartkop and the Uitspanplaats, Ketelfontein, on the summit of the Town-hill, still called from that circumstance the "Deelkraal" (or coral of distributing or dividing), where upwards of ten thousand were given out to the men engaged in the late expedition; and the inhabitants soon spread themselves about and seriously entered upon their rural and agricultural pursuits, extending themselves from the banks of the Tugela to the Umzimkulu.

By a singular coincidence, the then Governor of the Cape Colony (Sir George Napier) had just then been ordered to send home the 72nd Regiment, of which a detachment had occupied the harbour of Port Natal; and that detachment having been withdrawn, an opinion generally prevailed that the home Government had deliberately relinquished all idea of occupying this territory; so that the few English inhabitants then living at the port had no alternative but to acknowledge the supremacy of a society of farmers, who were soon to solve the problem as to their fitness for self-government.

About the same time my highly esteemed friend, Mr. Jacobus Nicolaas Boshof (subsequently called to the honourable but arduous post of President of the Orange Free State), arrived here with his numerous and influential clan, having determined

to give up the subordinate office he held at Graaff-Reinet, no longer there

"To bear the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

His merits as a zealous, able, and laborious officer were, however, immediately recognised in this district. He was at once made Landdrost of this division, then comprehending nearly the whole district; to him the inhabitants were indebted for the appointment of a regular Land Board, to inspect the farms and prepare titles to lands; as well as for various excellent local regulations, both at this place and at the port, and D'Urban. To him was also entrusted the preparation of some fundamental regulations in *reference to the chief executive and legislative* government of the country; but on that point (I have reason to believe) his own sensible and practical views were overruled or made to succumb to the stern republican feeling of the majority of the inhabitants, who appear to have been so inflated with their own ideas as to their power of governing the country collectively, that they (almost unanimously) resisted every proposition of becoming subject to any permanent chief or supreme head; but determined at least to try the experiment, which, I fear, the Transvaal Republic is now again repeating, and which will more than probably, in their case, also lead to the same results as before.

This leads me to give my hearers a succinct account of the kind of government which they introduced. Once every year the field-cornet of every division into which the country had been portioned out, sent in to the Landdrost here a list of the persons whom the inhabitants of that field-cornetcy or ward desired to become their representatives for the ensuing year. The district was divided into twelve such wards, from each of which the names of two persons were thus sent in, forming a council of twenty-four members, in which were vested all the combined supreme, executive, legislative, and judicial powers. This elective Council or "Volksraad" was required to assemble here (at Pietermaritzburg) every three months. At each meeting a chairman was chosen from among the members present to regulate the order of their proceedings; but he had not in any other respect the slightest addition of power or authority over the rest. All the members performed their duties gratuitously; but for the current and indispensable business of government Landdrosts were appointed for this place, D'Urban and Weenen, each of whom exercised a certain limited judicial authority. At Pietermaritzburg also two or three members of the Council, who lived in or near the town, were formed into a Committee of the Council (called the Commissie Raad), and had power to decide upon and carry out any executive or administrative duties requiring immediate despatch; but they were bound at the next general meeting of the

Council to report their proceedings and submit them for the sanction or disapproval of the body by which they were appointed.

Independently of the mode now described of governing "*this*" district, there existed also an ill-defined federal bond of union with the districts of Windburg and of the Modder and Caledon rivers lying beyond the Draaksberg, and now forming the Orange Free State, by virtue of which those districts, upon sending delegates to this place, could join in, and become subject to all laws and regulations made in their "combined" councils; but otherwise those districts were not to be bound by any decisions of the Volksraad here. The existence and character of this connection will have to be borne in mind when we come to the later portions of the history *which will be given in these lectures.*

From this statement, I believe every one of my hearers possessing any knowledge of history or any practical experience in the affairs of the world will at once perceive that the inhabitants were preparing for themselves a state of anarchy, from which the most deplorable results to themselves must inevitably arise. Without a head to direct or a power to control, they were left entirely to those innate feelings and notions of right and wrong that might be found in such a community. The Landdrost, the only paid functionary (whose salary was but the insignificant sum of £100 per annum) was so constantly thwarted by the ignorant and busy intermeddling

of the Committee Council (Commissie Raad) that Mr. Boshof soon resigned the office, and no entreaties or prayers could induce him to resume it. The Commissie Raad, on making a report of their proceedings to the full Council, were uniformly assailed by or exposed to the most violent attacks from the so-called "Publiek" (the public), the name assumed by those who were opposed to the measures that had been adopted; and in nine cases out of ten their acts, after the most outrageous personal attacks (so that on some occasions the members, as it is now known, came with arms secreted in their bosoms to guard against assaults), were again repudiated by a set of men who, going back to their homesteads the next day, were ill prepared to resist the reproaches and taunts of the selfish and the interested. It is a lamentable fact that upon my arrival here as Commissioner in 1843, I was informed by the then Landdrost that a judgment which he had passed several months before against a respectable inhabitant living only a few miles from this town (ordering him to return some head of cattle which he had illegally withheld from a Hottentot) was still lying in his office a dead letter; as this inhabitant had openly declared he would shoot the first messenger or other functionary who should come on his premises, and the Landdrost therefore could find no one inclined to run the risk of executing his warrant. Several of the most respectable and worthy inhabitants also assured me that it was impossible for them to live any longer

in such a state of anarchy as that into which the country was fast receding.

However, these sad results were not anticipated by the majority of the inhabitants in the year 1840, who were now formed into an independent people, but still felt that the recognition of that independence by Her Majesty's Government was all that was wanting to give stability to their government and institutions. They accordingly addressed His Excellency Sir George Napier on the 4th September, 1840, in the following terms:—

"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—By the blessing of God we have perfectly succeeded in establishing with our numerous surrounding savage enemies an advantageous, but, for the so long oppressed people, a lasting peace, which presents us with the cheering prospect of permanent prosperity, etc.

"This prospect is, however, somewhat darkened by the conviction that between us and our always beloved mother country there does not exist that friendly sympathy in our welfare which we would fain wish to see strongly and lastingly established.

"This general wish has been frequently under the consideration of the Volksraad, who have at their last meeting passed the following resolution, viz. :—

"'To submit respectfully to your Excellency, as the honoured representative of Her Majesty the Queen of England, that it may graciously please Her Majesty to acknowledge and declare us a free and independent people (a right so dearly purchased with our blood), and to concede to us all those privileges which constitute the boast and greatness of the nation which has the happiness to live under her noble government.'

"And to attain that object the Council have resolved (should your Excellency desire it) that two commissioners shall be sent to the colony of the Cape of Good Hope as our representatives, at such time and to such place as your Excellency shall appoint."

This letter ended by expressing their readiness to enter into a negotiation "in writing," if His Excellency should prefer such a course.

To this letter His Excellency, who was then at Graham's Town, returned a courteous reply, civilly declining the reception of the proposed commissioners, and expressing at once his opinion that he himself could enter into no arrangements which might in any respect be incompatible with the honour of Her Majesty, but also stating "that much time might be gained by their furnishing *His Excellency with an explicit statement of the terms on which they were disposed to treat, and which His Excellency hoped might yet lead to an amicable settlement of the future relations between the colony and Natal.*"

Although events of a more stirring nature subsequently intervened, to which it will be necessary to direct your attention, I may add here that this letter of His Excellency's led to another communication from the Volksraad, dated the 14th January, 1841, in which they embodied, in thirteen articles, the terms of their proposed alliance with Her Majesty and her heirs, the chief of which were :—

"1st. That Her Majesty would be pleased to acknowledge their settlement as a free and independent state, under the name of 'The Republic of Port Natal and adjacent countries'; the boundaries whereof could be hereafter defined.

"2nd. That Her Majesty's Government declare itself willing to treat with the Republic, in the relation of an ally.

"3rd. That the said Republic reciprocally declares itself to stand in the closest alliance with the British Government.

"4th. That Her Majesty's Government shall be at liberty, in case of any hostile undertaking against the Republic by sea, by any other power whatsoever, either to interpose itself in a friendly manner or to repel the same by force.

"5th. That in case of war between the British Government and any other power this Republic shall be viewed as *neutral*, and all private commercial vessels lying at anchor in the ports of the Republic shall be left unmolested.

"6th. That the British Government shall have the right to place here an ambassador or representative agent."

The remaining clauses were intended for securing a mutual free trade on the footing of the most favoured nations, and promising to give every encouragement for the spreading of the gospel; to oppose every attempt at establishing a slave trade, and not to make any hostile movement against any of the surrounding native tribes, unless such tribe, by any preceding hostile attack, *should*



*give the republicans occasion thereto*, so that they, for the maintenance of their rights, or for the security of their property, should be compelled to take up arms against such tribe.

The following circumstances which were then in the course of actual occurrence showed in how far these professions could be relied on. Towards the latter end of the year 1840 some of the farmers who had taken up their residence between the Umkomas and the Umzimkulu rivers came in and complained to the Volksraad that some of their cattle had been carried away by parties of Bushmen who were skulking in the Draaksberg fastnesses, and urged that they should be followed up and attacked in their hiding-places. In the month of December, therefore, a party of armed burghers was embodied, and their approved leader, Andries Pretorius, was again appointed by the Volksraad to the chief command, with express instructions as to the course he was to pursue. After having for some time in vain beat about the sources of the Umzimkulu and Umkomas rivers, some scouts who had been sent out by Pretorius reported that traces of cattle, which they had reason to believe were the property of emigrant farmers, had been followed and led towards some kraals of the Amabaka tribe, under the chief N'Capai. Hereupon it was at once resolved to make an attack upon that chieftain, and the forces under Pretorius accordingly attacked some of his kraals at daybreak, killed several men, captured about 3000<sup>+</sup> head of cattle and about 250

sheep and goats, and carried off into captivity about seventeen little boys and girls, who were picked up after their parents had either been killed or driven away from the scene of slaughter.

Upon the return of this commando it was soon felt by every respectable member of the Volksraad that Pretorius had grossly departed from the letter of his instructions, and that these proceedings had sadly laid themselves open to the most severe animadversions from the whole of the civilised world.\* At the very next meeting of the Volksraad Pretorius was called upon to give an account of his conduct, and one of the members proposed a resolution expressive of the unqualified disapprobation of those proceedings by the Volksraad; but Pretorius, being supported by his powerful clan and a war party, succeeded in getting this resolution withdrawn, so that subsequently to this little was said about these untoward events, at least *within this district*, but upon the intelligence reaching the Cape frontier a general burst of indignation arose against the emigrant farmers on account of this wanton and unprovoked attack, and Sir George Napier, in a letter addressed to me upon the subject (and which I have carefully preserved, as doing credit both to his head and heart), thus

\* A memorial had been drawn out and addressed to the Volksraad, by a number of respectable inhabitants residing chiefly at and near D'Urban, strongly protesting against this act of aggression made by Pretorius, contrary to the written instructions which had been delivered to him when he took the command of this expedition.

expresses his feelings in reference to that painful subject :—

“To suppose that yourself, or indeed any man in the colony, with a spark of humanity in his breast, would attempt to palliate such a flagrant act of cruelty and injustice, would be *a libel on my part quite unjustifiable*, as I am well convinced that the moment you read the account it must have made a deep impression of horror and disgust on so sensitive and honourable a mind as I believe yours to be, from the intercourse we have had together, particularly as regards the conduct of your misguided countrymen and fellow-subjects, the emigrant farmers of Natal.”

He informed me in that letter (which bears date at Graham's Town, 25th January, 1841) that Faku and the Amaponda tribes had now become apprehensive of similar unprovoked attacks, and that, in short, this attack of the emigrant farmers upon one of the peaceable tribes around them had greatly altered their position, since previously to this they had (as they professed) only fought for their own safety and in order to prevent the Zoolah chief, Dingaan, from accomplishing by force and treachery their total destruction, whereas they had now, after accomplishing their avowed object and while living in peace, wantonly sent a commando to attack a native chief living at least 200 miles from their country and close to the then existing borders of the Cape Colony.

His Excellency thereupon immediately despatched a force of 250 infantry, with a small detachment of the Cape Corps and two field-pieces, with orders to

march and take up a position on the Umzimvubu; but the difficulties of such a land expedition induced His Excellency so far to modify his arrangements that the troops which were placed under the command of Captain Smith, of the 27th Regiment, ultimately took up a position and remained for several months encamped on the banks of the Umgazi River, awaiting the course of events.\*

From that moment, however, the feelings of Sir George Napier towards the emigrant farmers, which had previously been marked by the utmost kindness and sympathy, were considerably altered; and he did not hesitate to express his indignation at their conduct in a letter addressed to them, which led to a reply from themselves, bearing date the 7th of April, 1841, in which (it is but just towards them to observe) *they attempt to vindicate their conduct by stating that they had the undeniable proofs that some of their cattle had been traced to the kraals of N'Capai, and that Faku and his people themselves had given the information that N'Capai had then some of their cattle in his possession; but these explanations only led His Excellency to announce to them formally, at once, that he declined any further intercourse with them, unless they dis-*

\* The Umgazi is a small stream arising in the Umtata or Zuurburg mountains (being a continuation of the Draaksberg or Quathlamba range of mountains, running from the Zoolah country to the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony), and flowing about midway between the Kie (the present eastern boundary of British Kaffraria) and the Umzimvubu or St. John's River.

tinctly acknowledged their full and entire allegiance to their lawful Sovereign, the Queen of England, and further declared their willingness to obey the lawful authority of the British Government.

A few months after this, after a long interval of suspense and anxiety, Sir George Napier received a communication from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the colonies, in answer to his several despatches of the years 1840 and 1841, in which he had brought before the notice of the home Government his correspondence with the Volksraad on the subject of their application to be declared a free and independent state. About that time an influential set of politicians had frequently mooted the question in Parliament, whether our colonial empire was not becoming far too extensive, and rather required to be reduced; and who, by dwelling upon the Kafir wars and the Canada and the New Zealand rebellions, and the expenses thereby incurred, were constantly urging upon Her Majesty's ministers the reduction of the colonial establishments to the lowest scale of efficiency. Under the influence of such a pressure, it appears that the home Government were very reluctant to extend their settlements in South Africa; and His Excellency was therefore left in a great measure to use his own discretion in regard to the matter in question, having merely received an announcement "that Her Majesty could not acknowledge the independence of her own subjects, but that the trade of the emigrant farmers

would be placed on the same footing as that of any other British settlement, upon their receiving a military force to exclude the interference with or possession of the country by any other European power." This resolution His Excellency communicated to the Volksraad, in a letter dated 3rd September, 1841, and there is no doubt that, if this communication had been entertained in the same spirit in which it had originated, the emigrants might even then have secured for themselves all the benefits of self-government, subject only to a mere acknowledgment of their allegiance to Her Majesty's Government, and with the additional advantage of military protection ; but the very announcement that military possession would be taken of the bay was sufficient to impress them with the idea that they were to be subject to military rule ; and under this impression they sent a reply, dated 11th October, 1841, wherein they state that, having asserted and maintained their independence as "Dutch South Africans" ever since they left the Cape Colony, they were fully determined not to surrender this point, and "as Her Majesty has been pleased to reject their very fair proposals, they were inclined to remain on the same footing as theretofore," significantly concluding by saying that

"Your Excellency's proposal to enter into a treaty with us *under the influence* of a military force, and without being acquainted with the terms of agreement, appears to us so unintelligible and undefined, that unless we are further informed, we cannot comprehend the object of it."

His Excellency Sir George Napier thereupon, under the rather indefinite authority contained in the despatches received up to that time from the Secretary of State, issued a proclamation on the 2nd December, 1841, in which he declared—

“That whereas the Council of emigrant farmers now residing at Port Natal and the territory adjacent thereto, had informed His Excellency that they had ceased to be British subjects, and refused to be recognised or treated as such; and whereas they had recently passed a resolution by which all Kafirs inhabiting Natal were to be removed, *without their consent*, into a country lying between the Umtaphoona and the Umzimvubu, forming part of the territory of the chief Faku, without having obtained the consent of the said Faku; from which measure warfare and bloodshed were to be apprehended: His Excellency announced his intention of resuming military occupation of Port Natal by sending thither, *without delay*, a detachment of Her Majesty’s forces.”

And His Excellency further solemnly warned the inhabitants against the consequences of in any way resisting or opposing Her Majesty’s forces or the due exercise of Her Majesty’s authority, and informed those who resided here, not being British subjects, that they would be placed out of the protection of the law and be liable to be dealt with as the interests of the Crown might require.

This proclamation, on reaching Natal, was viewed in the light of an overt declaration of hostilities, and was answered on the 21st February, 1842, in a very

lengthened and elaborate minute addressed to His Excellency, in which the emigrant farmers recapitulated all the grievances which they had suffered from successive governments, ascribing all their miseries to *one* single cause, viz., the absence of a representative government, which had been asked by them during many years past, while still residing in the Cape Colony, but had as often been delayed or refused: with regard to the intention to remove the Kafirs, they declared that the measure proceeded from real practical philanthropy, to avoid that collision of different races which would inevitably result from the continued residence of themselves amongst the natives; and with regard to their intention to remove them to the country between the Umtaphoona and the Umzimvubu, that it had been expressly stipulated by their treaty with Dingaan that their territory was to extend to the latter river, all that country having been previously conquered by Chaka; and Faku having, moreover, formally acknowledged the right of the emigrant farmers to it. This document concluded with a solemn protest against the occupation of any part of their country by Her Majesty's troops; and declared that they thereby held themselves free from all blame from the injurious consequences of that step, before God, their own consciences, and the world!

No doubt can at present exist in any dispassionate and impartial mind, that this important document,



which had been drawn up by Mr. Boshof for the Volksraad, ably answered the proclamation of His Excellency, to which might justly be applied the remark or piece of advice given me by an eminent special pleader of Lincoln's Inn when I took leave of him on my departure for the Cape Colony, and when he, rather prophetically anticipating my future elevation to the bench, said—"Now, Mr. Cloete, you have entered the law, and may possibly one day be elevated to the judicial bench. Allow me, therefore, to give you one friendly advice. Whenever you have to give your judgments, abstain as much as possible from giving your reasons; for your judgments may often be perfectly right, and yet your reasons altogether wrong."

There is no doubt that in this case the hostile attitude assumed by the emigrant farmers left the Governor of the Cape no alternative but either to admit or deny their independence, and the measure of sending a military force became the only one calculated to put that question at once to the test; but perhaps the result of that movement might have been quite different had it not been for an incident in the history of this district, which exerted an overwhelming influence on the minds of the inhabitants generally and of the members of the Volksraad in particular. The very next month after their solemn protest had been transmitted to Sir George Napier, a Dutch vessel, called the *Brazilia*, anchored in the port of Port Natal, and the supercargo,

Mr. Smellekamp, who afterwards resided in the Orange Free State (as it is now called), informed the emigrant farmers upon his first arrival that a number of merchants in Holland had taken a deep interest in their affairs, and had despatched this vessel for the express purpose of opening a direct trade with their country, and supplying them with "notions" of Dutch produce and manufacture: this arrival, and the display of the Dutch flag, aroused in all the emigrant farmers the most extravagant affection for the country and people to which most of them traced their descent. Mr. Smellekamp was received at this place with triumphal honours; public dinners were given him; the Dutch flag became the ensign of the new republic; and Mr. Smellekamp, led away by the enthusiasm with which his arrival had been greeted, gave the inhabitants of Natal the most exaggerated ideas of the power and influence of Holland in the council of nations; moreover, assuring them of the sympathy and support of the King of Holland, and finally entered into a formal treaty with the Volksraad assuring them of the "protection" of Holland, to which he affixed his signature in these terms:—

"Accepted in the name of the King of the Netherlands, subject to His Majesty's formal approval!"

He further gave them the strongest assurances that they would soon be provided with ministers and schoolmasters for the improvement of their moral

condition, and with arms and ammunition to repel any hostile attack with which they might be threatened.

I cannot give a more striking illustration of the manner in which the Volksraad were misled on that occasion, as to the support they expected from the King of Holland, than by relating the following anecdote. Some days after my arrival here in June, 1843, I had an interview with several leading members of the Volksraad, in the course of which I happened to allude to some political measures going on in Europe, and to state that such a measure was under the consideration of the *five* great powers: whereupon I was at once asked by the spokesman, which were these five *great* powers to which I had alluded. I replied that those powers were England, France, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. The querist at once exclaimed, "And is Holland not one of them?" This compelled me to enter at some length into the modern history of Europe, and to explain to them how Holland had, since the year 1830, by the rebellion and subsequent formation of Belgium into a separate kingdom, dwindled into a *third-rate* power of Europe; when the spokesman significantly and bitterly replied, "*We were never told that before, but the very reverse!*"

The emigrant farmers were, however, so fully convinced at the time that they had now obtained the countenance of a first-rate European power in support of their independence, that Mr. Smellekamp had

all his travelling expenses paid to enable him to return to Holland direct (as the *Brasilia* was destined for a lengthened cruise to the eastward); and he was, moreover, made the bearer of a number of official and other letters to the Ministers of State of his Majesty the King of Holland, and to many influential persons in that country, claiming the interposition of those persons in support of the independence of Natal; this was the state of feeling which prevailed among all classes and both sexes of the community here, when arrangements were at length completed to enable Captain Smith to break up from the Umgazi camp, and to pursue his course overland to Natal.

I cannot refrain from relating here a remarkable interview I had with His Excellency Sir George Napier on this subject. More than a year before this time His Excellency had disclosed to me (being then a member of the Legislative Council at the Cape), in the most frank and confidential manner, his views with regard to this district, and when his correspondence with the emigrant farmers assumed a somewhat serious aspect (after their attack upon N'Capai), His Excellency even proposed to me to undertake a mission to this country, which he was anxious to confide to me; but I at once respectfully declined the offer, stating that so long as the home Government had not determined upon its final course in regard to this question, I could never hope to accomplish anything satisfactory to either party.

His Excellency still continued to communicate to me every step in the correspondence and relations between the two countries, and the views of Her Majesty's Government upon the subject; and in the month of January, 1841, His Excellency had already, in the fullest manner, explained to me his policy in regard to this question. In the month of April, 1842, His Excellency informed me that the necessary arrangements having been now entirely completed, Captain Smith had, by the last post, announced his departure from the Umgazi camp, on his march to Natal. I could not help replying that I deeply regretted to hear this news, as I anticipated the most deplorable results from such a movement. Upon His Excellency pressing me for a further explanation, I at once said that I understood the captain's force to consist of 250 infantry, besides a small party of the Cape Corps and two field-pieces, encumbered, moreover, by a numerous waggon train; that such a force appeared to me just sufficient to show a hostile intention towards the emigrant farmers, without being sufficient to secure success, if hostilities should ensue, as they certainly would; and that if the farmers were to be aware of the march of the troops there was not a kloof or a drift which the latter would have to pass where they might not be cut off without a chance of even making an effectual resistance. Upon His Excellency then asking me what steps I should propose, I stated that if it were intended

to take possession of the port, this should be done from the sea, and the troops landed from vessels which might at once put them on shore. His Excellency, however, replied that he had been informed that the entrance to the bay was defended by field-works, which would render the landing dangerous; and, in short, that the measure under discussion had already been decisively settled by the troops having passed into the Amaponda country; but the substance of this interview was forgotten neither by His Excellency nor by myself when the disastrous events which I am about to refer to became known in Cape Town.

Captain Smith was at that time marching his little army along what is termed the lower or coast road. The rivers were still much swollen by recent rains, and as many difficulties were thus to be encountered and overcome, it occupied upwards of six weeks in bringing this force in safety through such a country, through which only a trader's waggon was known previously to have passed; but so sparse was the population, and so quietly had the march been managed, that the occupants of the picturesque farm of Sea View (the late Mr. Dunn and his family) were suddenly surprised, on the 3rd of May, 1842, by seeing the detachment enter their grounds at the head of the bay of Natal. The following day the troops marched through the hamlet of Congella, and took up their position in the flat nearly on the same spot as that where the camp is at present situated.

So far they had fortunately succeeded in taking up their ground at D'Urban without the slightest opposition, and a few days after their arrival the *Pilot* brig came to anchor in the bay, bringing them an ample supply of stores and provisions (of which they stood much in need), as also two 18-pounders and ammunition; and this vessel was soon afterwards followed by the *Mazeppa*, schooner, so that Captain Smith also took possession of the spit (where the present Custom House is now established), and placed a small detachment there to take charge of the goods as they were landed, and from whence he commenced drawing the supplies to the camp as occasion required.

In the meantime the Volksraad (then assembled at Pietermaritzburg), astounded at having been thus cut off from their only seaport, ordered out the whole of their armed burghers, under Andries Pretorius, as commander-in-chief, to the number of 300 or 400 men. Their headquarters were established at Congella, and messages at first, and afterwards letters, passed between Pretorius and Captain Smith, the former insisting upon the troops quitting their position, and the latter demanding that the armed burgher force which was gathering around should be withdrawn. Fourteen days had passed in this state of armed negotiation, when on May 23rd some of Captain Smith's cattle (which had always been grazing on the flats below the Berea Hills) were carried off by some of the herds of the emigrants; and Captain Smith, viewing this as an act of direct hostility, determined

at once to carry out a plan he had projected for some time, grounded (I fear) upon some well-intended but erroneous information he had received from some of the English residents at D'Urban (with whom he was in constant communication), for making a *night attack* upon the emigrants collected at Congella, and thus destroying their camp, waggons, and supplies.

The result of that "untoward expedition" may be best gathered from Captain Smith's own despatch, which I will proceed to give in a condensed form, but in nearly the very words of the writer, as found in his official letter to Colonel Hare, commanding his regiment, and the Lieutenant-Governor of the eastern frontier.

"In my last despatch," he says, "I detailed the various steps taken by the farmers to annoy the troops, and my determination to abstain if possible from hostilities if it could be done without detriment to the honour of the service, etc. ; but the receipt of an insolent letter, demanding that I should instantly quit Natal, followed by the removal, by armed men, of a quantity of cattle belonging to the troops, rendered it absolutely necessary that some steps should be taken in order to prevent a repetition of such outrages.

"I therefore determined, after mature consideration, to march a force and attack their camp at the Congella, and *set apart the night* of the 23rd" (the same day the cattle were taken) "to effect that object. As the road to the Congella lies for the most part through thick bush, *I thought it best to cross the sands at low water*, etc.

"Fitting a howitzer in a boat, and leaving it under charge of a sergeant of artillery, *I gave directions to drop down the*



*channel to within 500 yards of Congella, and there await the troops, in order that they might form under cover of its fire, aided by two six-pounders, which accompanied the force I took with me."*

[N.B.—That force is then stated in detail to have amounted to 140 men.]

The writer goes on:—

"In order to prevent our *movements being discovered*, I put the party in motion at 11 p.m. (*it being a bright moon-light!*), and arrived without molestation within nearly 800 yards of the place I proposed to attack.

"To my great *mortification*, I found that the boat had not dropped down the channel, *according to my instructions*; but as I considered it imprudent to wait, I was forced to make the attack without the valuable assistance which a discharge of shot and shells from the howitzer would have afforded me.

"The troops had just moved to where the termination of a range of mangrove bush opened to a level space in front of the Congella, when a heavy and well-directed fire was opened upon us. *A destructive fire from the guns* for a while silenced our opponents; but some of the draught oxen to the guns getting killed, and others wounded and escaping from their trektouws, rushed among the troops, upsetting the limbers, causing much delay in reloading and confusion in the ranks. This circumstance, added to the partial and at length total silence of the guns, being taken advantage of, they again opened a heavy fire, a severe loss resulting to the troops, etc., who reached the camp about two o'clock in the morning in tolerable order, leaving behind them, I regret to say, the *guns*, which the death of the oxen rendered it impossible to remove!"

This is the substance of Captain Smith's own official account; to which he adds:—

“The loss of the Boers it is difficult to estimate, but I am told it has been severe!”

There can be no doubt, however, in any reasonable mind that the whole of this disaster arose from the captain's utter ignorance of the character of the people he was going to attack, and of his want of acquaintance with the particular route he had selected. He admits that he first sent out a piquet to skirt the road in front of his position to *prevent his movements from being discovered*, while he selected a *bright moonlight* for his advance.

Now the fact was that every evening his camp was regularly surrounded by vedettes or guards, placed by the commandant of the emigrant farmers, who watched and reported during the night the most trifling incident that took place; and on the night in question the Field-cornet Joubert, with twenty-four men, had been posted in the woods through which we still have to pass in going to Congella, but which then consisted of far denser bush than they do at present. This party saw and watched the march of the troops; sent word to headquarters at Congella to put the burghers there upon their guard, and as the moon shone with almost the brightness of day, they gradually ensconced themselves each man behind one of the mangrove trees that grew down as far as low-water mark, and there

waited till they distinctly heard the word of command given to the troops to draw up in line, when they commenced and kept up a steady and deliberate fire, chiefly directed at the guns and drivers, and soon killing a promising young officer (Lieut. Wyatt) of the Artillery, who had the charge of the guns. The troops were thus thrown into utter confusion, and hastily fell back; the tide having by that time risen so far as to place them breast-high in water; and the admitted loss of 103 men killed, wounded, and missing out of a party of 140 who had marched out of the camp too clearly showed the fatal effects of the fire to which they had been exposed; while not a single man of the emigrant party had been hurt.

Equally injudicious were the arrangements of the English commander, founded on the support he expected to receive from the howitzer in the boat, for everyone now knows that at low water there is no channel affording sufficient depth of water for a boat with a heavy load to approach the Congella; so that, while the ebb-tide enabled the troops to march, the boat could not possibly accompany them; while, on the other hand, the moment there was sufficient depth of water for the boat to approach, the men would be up to their waists in water, and unable to perform any effectual service, so that it was physically impossible that the one could have acted in support of the other.

But if the planning and execution of this unto-

ward movement are justly open to the severest censure, it is equally due to Captain Smith to add that his exertions, his perseverance, and the example he set in the time of distress entitle him to the greatest praise. Reduced to nearly one half of his original strength by this misfortune, and expecting every moment an attack on his camp, he applied the next morning early for a truce of twenty-four hours, to bring in and bury the dead. This having been readily granted, he was indefatigable in putting his camp into a posture of defence. The numerous waggons he had brought with him were immediately so arranged as to fortify the place, somewhat in the fashion of a Boers' laager, and the soft and sandy nature of the soil enabled him, with the aid of all the non-combatants, to dig a trench and throw up a mound around the camp, by which the troops were in some measure protected. But the commanding officer also perceived that his only chance of relief depended upon the rapid transmission of intelligence to the authorities in the Cape Colony. He consulted some of the principal Englishmen then resident at D'Urban, and he happily found in your present worthy and worshipful mayor (George Cato), a faithful adviser, through whom means were devised to expedite the immediate intelligence to the Cape Colony.

Richard (commonly called Dick) King, then living in a hut at D'Urban, at once offered to take the despatch (of which I have just given the substance)

personally to Graham's Town. The following night he was supplied with two troopers, and the moment night had spread darkness around Mr. Cato got Dick King and the horses across the bay to the bluff, where King, mounting one horse and leading the other, soon crossed the Umlaas, and before daybreak passed the Umcomas, where he was safe from further pursuit, and wended his perilous journey across Kafir-land, where we shall leave him for the present.

The emigrant farmers, elated by their first success and the capture of two brass six-pounders, next turned their attention to the supplies which Captain Smith was receiving from the point and the vessels in the bay; and two days after the former night attack they made another on their side, attended with complete success. A detachment of their mounted men went unperceived past the mouth of the Umgeni, skirted the back beach (as it is called) at low water, and suddenly rushing upon the small detachment which was posted at the point, quickly overpowered it, the officer in command having barely time to escape by jumping through the back window of the hut he was occupying. Two men were killed, two more wounded, and the remainder of the detachment were taken prisoners, and, together with most of the English inhabitants of D'Urban (who were naturally inclined to assist Her Majesty's troops), were all brought up to this town of Pietermaritzburg, where the present court-house was converted into a prison, in which they were kept closely confined.

One eighteen-pounder and a great part of the provisions still remaining in the *Pilot* and *Maseppa*, which Captain Smith had not been able to remove, together with many engineers' tools, were thus captured; but fortunately all the ammunition had been previously removed to the camp and secured in a temporary magazine. The vessels at anchor and the point itself were thus taken by the emigrants, and the troops thereby completely cut off from any further communication by sea.

The farmers, having thus possessed themselves of one long eighteen-pounder and two brass six-pounders, commenced regular field-works around the camp, and having brought their guns to bear, carried on for three days a heavy cannonade against the camp, the guns being well handled by a few Germans whom they had enlisted for that service, and who had served in some of the Continental armies before settling in this district. Their fire was answered by a howitzer and an eighteen-pounder, which Captain Smith had been able to get up from the point before its capture. But ammunition and shot soon failing the besiegers, they established a foundry, where the links of a chain cable, taken from the *Maseppa* or *Pilot*, were severed and covered with lead, of which they had a tolerably good supply. But this stock also becoming soon exhausted, as well as their gunpowder, they determined to await the more tedious but more certain effect of a rigid blockade, well knowing that if the troops were effectually deprived of all

external aid, they must succumb to the pressure of famine.

Captain Smith had previously foreseen that this last would prove to be his most serious enemy, and he had therefore provided against it with the utmost care. All the remaining cattle (which he was now unable to send out to graze) and the horses in the camp (for which he no longer had food) were slaughtered and converted into "biltong," and the troops were placed on the shortest allowance possible. Two different sorties, made during the month of June, led to no further result than the loss of a few lives on both sides; but the emaciated forms, the sunken eyes, and the dejected appearance of the soldiers in the camp indicated but too clearly that this state of things could not last much longer. Already had their rations been reduced to the smallest quantity sufficient to sustain life, and for some days the biltong of horseflesh had been issued as their only animal food; and after having been thus hemmed in for thirty days, every hour and minute began to be calculated as to the probability of their receiving timely succour. At length, as darkness set in on the evening of the 24th of June, several rockets and blue-lights, illuminating the sky and hills to seaward, announced that relief was at hand.

At this juncture I shall at present conclude this lecture, as I fear I have already trespassed too long upon your time, and patience, and indeed I have found, as I was proceeding, that to give only a

summary of events would far exceed the limit. (Hare)  
 a single address. If you, then, continue to feel of  
 interest in the subject, I intend, a few days hence,  
 to conclude this portion of history in another lecture  
 in this place, when I propose to exhibit to you the  
 last acts of the drama in which many fierce passions  
 and contests were still displayed, but ending in the  
 final submission of this country to Her Majesty's  
 authority.



## LECTURE V.

### SUBMISSION TO THE CROWN

I STATED in my last lecture that Captain Smith, after his disastrous defeat at the Congella, had found in the present worthy mayor of D'Urban (Mr. George Cato) a faithful adviser, and in Richard King an energetic, public-spirited messenger, who, without taking any selfish advantage of the circumstances, responded at once to his call, and went off to announce the fatal result of the night attack on the Congella to the authorities in the Cape Colony. It was evident that the only chance of relief depended on the speed with which that intelligence was conveyed, and Dick King (as he is commonly called), feeling the importance of this mission, got through the Amabaka\* and Amaponda countries at the extreme peril of his life, and on the ninth day reached Graham's Town in an almost exhausted state. On the receipt of this sad intelligence the

\* He was surrounded by the Amabakas, who, mistaking him at first for a Dutch emigrant farmer, were about to take revenge upon him for the attack made upon them by Pretorius; but he, happily, could make himself understood, and explained his errand, upon which they allowed him to pass.

Lieutenant-Governor on the frontier (Colonel Hare) immediately despatched the grenadier company of the 27th Regiment to Port Elizabeth, where they were embarked in the schooner the *Conch*, then fortunately lying there at anchor, under the command of our present port-captain (Captain Bell), who had already visited, and was well acquainted with, the harbour of Natal; and Sir George Napier, upon receiving the same painful account at Cape Town, had fortunately at his disposal the 25th Regiment, which was then only awaiting transports to take them on to India, but which might not be expected for some weeks. Admiral Percy (the admiral on the station) at once gave up his flagship, the *Southampton*, of fifty guns, for the proposed expedition; and my worthy and excellent brother, Colonel (now Sir Josias Cloete), having been placed in command of the whole force, the 25th Regiment were marched down and embarked at Simon's Town, and in an incredibly short space of time, on the 24th June (exactly one month from the day of Captain Smith's disaster), the *Southampton* arrived off the bar and found the *Conch*, which had anchored off the bay the day preceding, and as the evening fell rockets and blue-lights were immediately thrown up to cheer the besieged with the prospect of instant relief.

The next day, every arrangement being made to effect a landing, the *Southampton* brought up as close to the beach as she could with safety approach, and

a favourable south-east breeze having just sprung up, Captain Bell, in the *Conch*, led the way over the bar, having all the man-of-war boats in tow, the last of which, as they got on the bar, cast off their lines and landed, and attacked the Bluff, where the emigrant farmers had planted two ship guns with a small force to defend the approach to the bay. But Captain Wells, of the 25th Regiment, with his small party soon effected a landing and captured their guns, while the *Conch* and the remaining boats were exposed to a severe cross-fire as they entered the port; but the tide and breeze had wafted them in so rapidly that with the trifling loss of two killed and four wounded the main body, under the command of Colonel Cloete and Major D'Urban, made good their landing near the old custom-house, from whence the emigrant farmers were soon completely driven away, their flag taken down and captured, and their whole force pursued towards the Congella, thus placing Colonel Cloete in communication with Captain Smith, and the whole of the country within the Berea Hills in his possession. The next day, hearing that some of the farmers were still gathered at the Congella, Colonel Cloete advanced with 200 men and drove them from that position, when they retired to Cowie's farm, at the foot of the hill which now encloses the rising Pine Town, to the southward. But now the commanding officer found himself placed in a most anxious position; the gentle south-east breeze which had wafted them

on shore on the 25th of June increased the same evening into a violent and (at that season of the year) very unusual gale from the south-east. The *Southampton*, which had so gallantly placed itself as near as possible to the bar to aid in the landing of the troops, after drifting awhile, was obliged to put to sea with the loss of some of her anchors, having with difficulty weathered the dangerous Bluff, and was driven about for four or five days without a chance of returning to the anchorage. The supplies on board the *Conch* and those found at the Congella were quite insufficient to supply food for the six or seven hundred men now under his command, and Colonel Cloete thus availed himself of the only means he had at hand to ensure some supplies. A number of petty Kafir chieftains, attracted by the hostilities which had been going on for more than a month, immediately repaired to the camp, tendering their ready assistance, and Colonel Cloete requested them to supply the troops as soon as possible with some cattle, both for slaughter and for drawing his field-guns, if further hostilities had to be carried on. These Kafirs soon spread about, and in search of cattle a party of these appears to have visited two farms, situate between the Umlaas and the Llovo rivers (now forming part of the Umlaazi location), and there meeting two very respectable farmers, Van Rooyen and Oosthuysen, who were known for their very peaceable disposition, murdered them in cold blood, but refrained from

any act of violence to their wives and children, who escaped to the camp of the emigrants, and filled it with dismay and horror at the idea that the Kafirs had been incited to commit these murders upon the farmers. Colonel Cloete, on hearing this report, at once issued a public notice, solemnly disavowing having given even an implied sanction to such excesses; but at the same time warned the emigrants that it was quite impossible for him to prevent these outrages, so long as they continued in open rebellion against Her Majesty's authority.

The latter were, however, so disconcerted by these murders, and they gave rise to such a state of panic, that all those farmers who were still residing on their homesteads at once fled with their families and flocks to this town of Pietermaritzburg, which became the scene of the utmost confusion.

The Volksraad held an extraordinary meeting on a Sunday in the church-building (the court-hall being considered too small to hold the whole of the public), to take into consideration the present aspect of affairs. Mr. Boshof was called to the chair, but it was quite impossible for him to preserve anything like regularity in their proceedings. The most violent attacks and recriminations ensued, which occupied the whole day, until, towards the approach of the evening, the strength of the loudest declaimers being somewhat exhausted, Mr. John van der Plank (who, with Mr. Mesham and Thomas Sheers, were the only Englishmen who had been allowed to be

at liberty) proposed a written resolution to the effect:—

“That in the present state of affairs it was expedient and necessary to propose to Col. Cloete the following terms of peace:—

“1. That there should be granted a general amnesty to all emigrant farmers who had engaged in these hostilities.

“2. That Col. Cloete should put an end to, and support them in, any attack from the Kafirs.”

The chairman thereupon ordered the doors to be closed to the public, and having put these resolutions to the Volksraad, they, by a large majority, adopted them as a basis of negotiation with Col. Cloete, and appointed a deputation, consisting of the Chairman, Mr. Van der Plank, Mr. Zietsman, and two more of the Council, to proceed to D'Urban to enter upon the terms of this pacification, but so impressed were the Council, and even their chairman, of the succour they were to receive from the King of Holland, and of the effect which their petitions, entrusted to Mr. Smellekamp, were to have, that the deputation was directed first to make their stand on the submission they had proffered of this country to Holland, conceiving that this would be held even by Col. Cloete as a bar to any treaty with Her Majesty.

The deputation met Col. Cloete at Cowie's Hills, whither he had already advanced with a small party, but such were the difficulties of obtaining cattle for transport that on that score alone he could not

possibly have made a further advance. There the chairman (Mr. Boshof) opened his negotiations, but on mentioning the difficulty of their position by their submission to the King of Holland, Col. Cloete at once dismissed this plea with ridicule, and stated that he had already prepared in writing the only terms which he was willing to grant them. These were read to them, and the deputation did not appear to object to their tenor, but stating that they could only be sanctioned by the Volksraad at their special meeting, they suggested that by Col. Cloete's presence at Pietermaritzburg this was likely to be accomplished far more readily and satisfactorily than by constant deputations or correspondence. Col. Cloete at once adopted that suggestion, both with a view of bringing these matters to a speedy issue, by showing them this mark of his confidence and power, and furthermore (and indeed chiefly) with a view of obtaining by ocular proof and inspection a thorough knowledge of the country and of the roads and passes from the bay to this town, regarding which they were all at the camp in the utmost ignorance.

Col. Cloete accordingly soon followed the deputation to this place, accompanied by Lieut. Napier as his aide-de-camp, Lieut. Fuller of the Engineers, and Lieut. Maclean of the Artillery. He was received with every mark of respect, and a meeting of the Volksraad was specially convened for the 5th July, 1842, when they formally tendered to

Col. Cloete the following written deed of submission, signed by Mr. Boshof, as their chairman, and twelve members of the Volksraad. It was to this effect :—

“We, the undersigned, duly authorised by the emigrant farmers of Pietermaritzburg, Natal, and the adjacent country, do hereby tender for them and ourselves our solemn declaration of submission to the authority of Her Majesty the Queen of England.

“And we do further accept and subscribe to the following terms that have been required :—

“1st. The immediate release of all prisoners, whether soldiers or civilians ;

“2nd. The giving up of all cannon in our possession, those taken as well as others, with the ammunition and stores belonging to them ; and

“3rd. The restitution of all public and private property in our possession, which had been confiscated.

“Signed by J. Boshof, President, and 12 members.”

Upon this document being delivered to Col. Cloete, the guns which had been brought up here being surrendered, and the prisoners, who had undergone a strict, and occasionally a severe, imprisonment in the court-hall for six weeks, being immediately released,—Col. Cloete granted them in writing the following terms, viz. :—

“1st. Under the authority of His Excellency the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Cape of Good Hope he agreed to grant them :—

“1. A general amnesty or free pardon to all persons who have been engaged in resisting Her Majesty's troops and authority, with the exception of Joachim Prinsloo,



A. W. Pretorius, J. J. Burger, Michael van Breda, and Servaas van Breda, whose cases were to be left for the special consideration of his Excellency the Governor."

Colonel Cloete, however, after signing and interchanging these documents, became so satisfied that Andries W. Pretorius, although then their military commander, had so powerfully exerted his influence to bring about this pacification by satisfying the great majority of the utter hopelessness of further resistance, that he withdrew his name from the list of the proscribed, leaving the four others to await His Excellency's decision.

He further declared,—

"2. To respect all private property, whether houses, goods, or chattels.

"3. That the emigrant farmers were at liberty to return unmolested to their farms, with their guns and horses.

"4. That the farmers would be protected against any attack of the Zoolahs or native tribes.

"5. That the tenure of their lands would not be interfered with, but must be left for the final determination and settlement of Her Majesty's Government.

"6. That the existing administration and civil institutions, under acknowledgment of Her Majesty's supremacy, shall not be interfered with till the pleasure of Her Majesty shall be known. But that the Volksraad was not to extend any jurisdiction to Port Natal, which was to be placed for the present under the exclusive control of the military commandant of Her Majesty's troops. The limits of Port Natal being defined by the Umlazi River to the west, the Umgane to the east, and a line along the ridges

and crest of the Berea Hills, joining those two rivers to the north.

"7. That the Kafirs shall for the present remain in the unmolested occupation of the grounds upon which they were upon the arrival of Her Majesty's troops, subject to such future arrangements as the Government may find necessary to make for general security.

"8. That the port and custom dues remain to the Crown, and are to be left at the disposal of Her Majesty's Government."

The principal and most effective force under Col. Cloete's command, consisting of the 25th Regiment, being urgently required for India, was thereupon immediately embarked on board of the *Southampton*, in which Col. Cloete also returned to Cape Town, leaving the command of Port Natal and the country within the limits of the Berea, as heretofore defined, and as entirely excluded from any interference from the Volksraad, under the command of Capt. Smith.

The whole of the proceedings of Col. Cloete were entirely approved of by His Excellency, and subsequently by Her Majesty's ministers, and no one, possessed of a dispassionate and unprejudiced mind, can fail to appreciate how satisfactorily, in the space of two weeks, he had accomplished the settlement of this very difficult question, and saved this country, as well as Her Majesty's arms, the sad consequences of an unnatural civil war.

But there were not wanting in and about the camp, and among the persons who had undergone the

hardships of imprisonment, several who deeply regretted that no opportunity had been afforded them of satisfying or (rather) glutting their feelings of revenge. These represented the settlement as not only inconclusive and unsatisfactory, but as also keeping up a spirit of enmity towards the emigrant farmers. They made every little complaint the theme for a renewal of hostilities with them, as all supplies having to be brought from Port Natal, some intercourse was necessarily kept up with this town and Port Natal. The circulation by the Volksraad of their title deeds to different farmers, which had been struck off on a small American press at the Umlazi station many months before the outbreak of hostilities, and which, prefaced by styling the Volksraad "The Hon'ble Volksraad, as having Supreme Power in the Government of the Republic of the Dutch South African Emigrants at Natal," was made the text of a violent and angry correspondence between Captain Smith and the Volksraad, and matters were gradually leading both parties to such an estrangement that no doubt they would soon have ended again in open hostility but for my arrival as commissioner for this district in the beginning of June, 1843, of which I shall now proceed to detail the circumstances.

In discussing with Mr. Boshof and some of the most enlightened members of the Volksraad the manner in which the final arrangements for the settlement of this district could be best effected

(for neither Colonel Cloete nor His Excellency the Governor had at that time any authority to enter upon any definite arrangements involving the permanent occupation of the country), they had suggested that the best mode of attaining that object would be by the appointment of a special Commissioner, with whom these matters could be finally settled; and Colonel Cloete conveyed this their wish to His Excellency Sir George Napier, who, in transmitting an account of all these stirring events to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, also referred to that suggestion of Her Majesty's Government if it should be determined upon to take formal possession of the country.

Nine months were, however, allowed to pass, leaving all these matters in a state of the most painful suspense; and indeed an opinion was getting rapidly prevalent that Her Majesty's Government would still eschew all interference in the administration of this country, when, on the 1st May, 1843, I received a note from His Excellency Sir G. Napier, stating that he had just received an important despatch on the subject, and, having determined to offer me to go to Port Natal as Commissioner, he wished me to come and peruse the despatch. I immediately repaired to Government House, and upon its perusal was so forcibly struck by the liberal and enlightened policy which Lord Stanley (then Secretary for the Colonies) had laid down for the settlement and future administration of this district,

that I expressed myself very confident of the result of a mission which would announce such principles to the inhabitants; and I willingly gave up temporarily my profession, and accepted the commission, little aware, however, of the additional difficulties which at that very moment were arising within this district to oppose or prevent the attainment of such an object.

A meeting of the Legislative Council was called for the 4th May, at which His Excellency read an able minute, setting forth the substance of the Secretary of State's despatch; and on the 12th of May my official appointment was announced in a proclamation, which fully set forth the extent of my authority and duties, and the conditions expressly required from the inhabitants before they were to be considered entitled to the privileges vouchsafed to them by Her Majesty's Government.

The *Cleopatra* frigate soon after brought me to this place, when, on landing at the bay, I was informed by the commandant that a fortnight before the Dutch schooner *Brasilia* had again made her appearance off the bar, having the notorious Mr. Smellekamp and a clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church and a schoolmaster on board, and wishing to communicate with the emigrants, but that he had refused them all intercourse with the shore, and had ordered the vessel away with all on board, at which he, Major Smith (for the defence of the camp had earned him a brevet majority),

understood that great excitement prevailed at Pietermaritzburg. I felt the necessity of immediately checking that ebullition, and I sent off instantly an express to the Volksraad announcing my arrival, and on the third day after my landing arrived at Pietermaritzburg. Mr. Boshof, Mr. Zietsman, and two or three others came to meet me on my approach to the town, and in the evening I received the visits of some of the members of the Volksraad, with whom I made the arrangements for holding a meeting in the court-hall. The next morning on entering the court-room I found about 400 or 500 persons assembled in and around, almost closing up every approach towards it, even every window. Mr. Stephanus Maritz, sen., presided on the occasion, and to the meeting I opened my commission and gave an outline of the duties upon which I was about to enter. After being listened to with great attention for nearly an hour that I addressed the meeting, a notorious character, Anton Fick, arose, stating that in the name of the "public" he held a document, which he desired to present to me. On asking him the nature of the document he stated that it contained a resolution not to enter into any negotiations with me, until they (the public) had had intercourse with the persons on board the *Brasilia*, and had ascertained the replies from the King of Holland and his ministers as to their relations with that country.

I at first declined receiving or hearing any such

document read, but finding the meeting much excited on the subject, I agreed to its being read, under the express condition of my being at liberty to answer it directly, if I deemed it advisable; and with this stipulation he proceeded to read a long, rambling statement of all the grievances and hardships of the emigrants to obtain possession of this country, full of complaints at the conduct of Major Smith in not allowing their clergyman and schoolmaster to join them, nor even to allow them to hear the replies from Holland to the treaties they had proposed, etc.; the whole ending in a series of resolutions expressive of their determination not to enter into any arrangements with me until these functionaries were restored to them, and they had communicated with the *Brazilia*.

I thereupon answered these resolutions immediately by pointing out that, at my departure from the Cape, nothing had been known of the *Brazilia* visiting this coast; that the angry tone of their late intercourse with the commandant had, no doubt, led to his prohibiting any communication with the vessel, but that his proceedings were necessarily unknown to the authorities at the Cape, and that I had, as Commissioner, no concern in these matters, except to assure them that if the *Brazilia* had touched at the Cape no doubt an authority would have been given to these functionaries to land; and I further pointed out the extreme folly of expecting any support from the King of Holland; with the hope of which they

were still so impressed. This proposal from the "public" having been thus set at rest, I addressed myself to the Volksraad, and requested of them to know how and in what manner they would signify their acceptance or rejection of the conditions I had laid before them; when their chairman, after due consultation on that point, declared that there were only at that moment some half-dozen members of the Volksraad present, that the decision of such an important question required their full attendance, and that their ordinary quarterly meeting being fixed for the first week of August, they desired an adjournment of the question till that date, when a full attendance of all the members would be specially called for.

This appeared so reasonable that I at once assented to that adjournment, intending to devote the intermediate time in inspecting and registering farms and lands in and about D'Urban, from which the influence and authority of the Volksraad had been expressly excluded by the treaty with my brother, Sir Josias Cloete.

I, however, remained here (at Pietermaritzburg) a few days longer to explain more fully to the most respectable inhabitants the policy of Her Majesty's Government; and during that time I received the undoubted information that the "war party" here (at the head of which Commandant Gert Rudolph had placed himself) had sent expresses forthwith into the present Sovereignty and Transvaal country,



representing that they were about being attacked by Her Majesty's troops, and strongly urging the commandants of those districts to be here with all the armed force they could collect by the beginning of August, when they expected an outbreak of hostilities; and at the same time I received a memorial signed by the principal inhabitants of this town, intimating their dread of these hostilities, and soliciting the support of the Government against any violence which they apprehended in case they were to show their loyalty to the Government or disapprobation of these violent proceedings. This intelligence I immediately transmitted to His Excellency, and returned to D'Urban, where the registration of lands fully engaged my time during the months of June and July, when on the 21st July, Her Majesty's steamer *Thunderbolt* (the first Government steamer employed upon our coast, and subsequently lost on Cape Receif) arrived at Port Natal with a detachment of the 45th Regiment and two guns, which His Excellency had despatched immediately on the receipt of my communication as to my first reception here, and the expected meeting in August.

With this accession of force I had flattered myself that Major Smith would have been enabled to advance upon this town before any burgher force could have arrived from behind the Draaksberg; that he might thus have imparted such a confidence in the inhabitants, in and about the town, as

to ensure their presence at the meeting undeterred by the menaces of those who were bent upon war; but Major Smith declined, on what the Czar terms "strategic grounds," making the advance; and his determination (although at the time deeply regretted by me) only tended in its results to lead to a far more satisfactory conclusion of this political drama.

I had, however, determined personally to be present here, and I accordingly intimated this intention to the Volksraad, and arrived on the 6th of August on the Uysdorns hill.\* I was soon met by an advanced guard of some twenty men, and near the town by about eighty or a hundred more mounted persons, all, however, unarmed, but on reaching my residence at the house of Messrs. Behrens (now part of the present Colonial Office), I was waited upon by Commandant Mocke and five or six other commandants, and about twenty field-cornets from behind the Draaksberg, who, with about 800 or 1000 men, had marched into the town a few days before and had encamped on the market-square, where about twenty waggons were ranged, containing all their arms, ammunition, and supplies. The commandants, severally, at once offered me a guard for my personal protection, which I, however, civilly declined, expressing my entire conviction that I

\* This hill is about five miles from Pietermaritzburg, remarkable for being densely covered with the thorny "námosa," and where the clan of "Uys" had made their first encampment.

needed no such protection ; but I certainly found the town in a state of confusion and excitement, which it is quite impossible to describe.

The proceedings of the Volksraad had commenced the day before my arrival, when, under the influence of the "war party," the commandants and field-cornets from beyond the Draaksberg had insisted upon holding a "combined" Council of delegates from the two districts on this and that beyond the mountain (as explained in my first lecture); and that this combined Council should consist of sixty members, for the palpable object thus to give a preponderating number of votes on any question to their numerous party. This they had succeeded in carrying, and the moment they had been elected and taken their seats the notorious Mr. Fick commenced a personal attack upon Mr. Boshof of the most virulent character, charging him with having betrayed their Council, as they termed it, and with having falsified a document (referred to in my previous lecture), by which the members of the Volksraad had tendered their submission to Her Majesty's authority in July, 1842.

It appeared that on that occasion Mr. Boshof, having been the chief (if not the only) person who could fitly embody their resolutions in writing, had had the labour of drawing out and engrossing all the documents, when some duplicates or triplicates having been required of this treaty, one or two of the country members, who were anxious to leave

the town and return to their families, had signed one of the copies of the document in blank, which Mr. Boshof subsequently had to fill in.

This had maliciously been perverted into his having got some members to sign a document of which they knew not the contents, and was made the handle of the most malignant attacks upon his person and character; but, fortunately, the members whose convenience he had consulted in taking their signatures before he had been able to make all the copies were present, and at once completely explained and refuted this base calumny; while Mr. Boshof's whole career was so unassailable that all these objections were overruled, and he was allowed to take his seat in the Council, where they were well aware that he could not fail to exert a commanding influence.

One entire day was occupied with this preliminary wrangle, and the parties broke up late at night to recommence their deliberations the next morning early. During that night, however, a party of the most violent and unprincipled ruffians among them held a secret meeting in one of the huts about the "vley"\* in this town, where they resolved upon coming armed to the meeting of the Volksraad the next morning, there to bring about a scuffle or outbreak, in the course of which they would make an attack upon (or, in plainer language, assassinate) Boshof, Pretorius, and two others, whom they con-

\* A swampy part of the town, at that time almost uninhabited.

sidered the principal heads of the peace or submission party. Andries Pretorius, who on that occasion proved himself the true benefactor of this country, and who by his scouts kept a watchful eye upon all the proceedings of every party, got very early intelligence of this plot, and he accordingly came to the meeting also secretly armed and surrounded by numerous and powerful clans; and as the business of the meeting was about to commence, seeing the party mustering, whom he knew had been hatching this atrocious conspiracy, he addressed the meeting in a strain of impassioned extemporaneous eloquence not unworthy of Cicero himself, and hardly surpassed by the latter in his first "Catilinaria," which, if worked up by a Sallust or Livy, would have handed down his name to posterity as a great orator; in the course of which he informed the chairman and the meeting of a foul conspiracy, which he knew had been planned against the friends of peace and good order, and that he could at once point out the principal ruffians; but he disdained to hand down their names to everlasting infamy, and (looking to the knot where they were chiefly collected), stated that their looks already betrayed the guilt of their consciences; that he dared them to show the arms which he knew they were secretly hiding in their bosoms; that if force and violence were intended he and his friends were fully prepared to repel it; but if not lost to all sense of shame, he advised them to hide their diminished heads, and to

retire from a conflict where reason and temper were required and not brute force, and thus save themselves from the everlasting infamy which would attach upon their names if they once commenced upon any act of open violence.

Never were the following lines of the immortal poet more applicable than to the position in which these persons then appeared :—

“Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought ;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action” :

for not one ventured to answer the challenge. The whole of that clique, who soon betrayed themselves by their manner and countenance, silently dropped off from the assembly, and the meeting subsided at once into more order and decorum than had been hitherto observed. Stephanus Maritz, sen., particularly distinguished himself by the temper, tact, and judgment which he displayed on that memorable occasion : he very adroitly got a preliminary question to be mooted in how far the inhabitants from beyond the Draaksberg had a right to vote on this question, viz., whether they were to be affected by any arrangement with me, as they had not been parties to the treaty with Col. Cloete ; and a deputation from the Volksraad waited on me at Mr. Behren’s residence, where I was anxiously waiting the result of this

meeting to obtain a formal answer to a question, "How far my authority was to extend, or how far Her Majesty meant to assert her supremacy over this country?" Although I was then but a few yards from the court hall and square where those exciting events were taking place, I was naturally kept in ignorance of what was passing at the very moment. As I had determined, as yet, not to take any part in those proceedings, having only informed the chairman that I was here ready to answer any questions they might wish to put, and thus not being aware of the exact purport and object of the question when put to me, I yet candidly informed them that by my instructions the future boundaries of this district had been left entirely to my decision and report; that I was, however, fully aware that Her Majesty's Government did not wish in any way to extend her authority over vast extents of country where an effectual protection to life and property could not be secured to the inhabitants, and that I did not therefore hesitate to declare at once that I was fully prepared to recommend that the extent of this district should be bounded on the north by the natural Quathlamba range of mountains, and not to extend beyond it.

This answer had a great effect upon the deliberations of the Volksraad. A resolution was thereupon put and carried, declaring that, as the inhabitants beyond the Quathlamba or Draaksberg mountains were not to be affected by any of my proceedings,

their representatives now here had no right to vote on questions which did not affect them; and some of the commandants and representatives from beyond the Sovereignty even joined in that resolution, seeing that they would have considerable difficulty in carrying their original intention. The second day's proceedings then closed late at night by the whole of the members who had taken their seats as representing the Winburg and (now) Sovereignty territory, withdrawing from the Volksraad; and Commandant Mocke, accompanied by De Kock, Du Plooy, and several other field-cornets, called upon me the same evening to bid me farewell, Mocke declaring with a bitterness of feeling (which clearly betrayed the disappointment and vexation he felt) that he never again would have anything to do with Natal and its affairs, that he had been grossly deceived by the representations he had received, and that he would now order his men peaceably to withdraw. This order seemed to meet with the most implicit obedience. The next day passed by in their making preparations for their departure, and the following day the whole of that division, about 700 or 800 strong, wended their way over the town-hill on their return to the Sovereignty, encountering great hardships on the road from snowstorms and scarcity of provisions.

On the third day of the meeting of the Volksraad its members were thus reduced to the twenty-four members representing the Council for this district



only; and the calm and temperate tone adopted at that meeting seemed at once to give promise of a peaceful and satisfactory conclusion to their deliberations.

Dr. Poortman happened to have received a letter from some friend in Holland, in which, alluding to the letters brought over by Smellekamp, the writer informed him of the delusion which had been practised upon them here; and after this letter had been submitted to the closest scrutiny by the post-mark being examined, no doubt remained as to its genuineness, and they appeared at last to become satisfied that all hope of succour or support from Holland was at an end, when they took into consideration the terms of Lord Stanley's despatch of the 13th December, 1842, which I had brought with me, and of which I had made a translation, so far as to show the sound reasoning and the liberal policy by which Her Majesty's Government were actuated in their adoption of this territory.

I had caused several copies to be made of this extract, which I had circulated among them, and a perusal thereof will, even now, no doubt, interest my auditors, and confirm the opinion I had formed on that subject.

One part of that despatch is to this effect, viz. :—

“The question then remains, in what manner to deal with the district and the numerous population thus brought again into submission, and under allegiance to Her Majesty.

“Various courses may be pursued, the supremacy of the

British crown having been established the existing population might be permitted to remain and conduct their own affairs, withdrawing the British troops, and thus neither exercising practical control over them, or affording them efficient protection.

"They may be removed and compelled to return under the pressure of an overwhelming military force, such as would leave no alternative but those of submission or extermination.

"The emigrants may be summoned to return within the settled limits of the colony of the Cape, deprived of all protection, in the event of their refusal, against the hostility of the Zoolahs and other tribes, and of the Kafirs within their own boundaries, and further, if deemed expedient, cut off from all supplies by sea, and all regular and uninterrupted communication by land : or, lastly, they may be taken under the protection of the British crown, their district recognised and adopted as a British Colony, and such institutions established, under British authority, as Her Majesty may think fit.

"All these courses are open to adoption, and all require thus to be maturely and carefully weighed.

"Two other courses, indeed, there are, to neither of which, however, could Her Majesty's servants for a moment listen: the one, to admit the independence of the emigrants, and to disclaim all responsibility respecting them; the other, to permit them to come under the protection or dominion of any foreign power.

"1. The first course of the four to which I have adverted is open to very obvious objections. Virtually, though not nominally, it would be conferring independence on the emigrants, and the British Government would, in the face of the civilised world, make itself responsible for the conduct of its subjects, whom, nevertheless, it neither assumed

to control by legislation, nor to protect by military support. I fear, moreover, that in the present state of the population, many of their acts, whether towards each other, towards the native tribes within their limits, or towards those who surround them, might be such as the British Government could neither approve nor permit; that disunion and jealousies among themselves would require the intervention of some supreme authority, and that Her Majesty could not safely entrust the emigrant farmers with the unchecked management of the Kafirs within their territory, nor repose entire confidence in the moderation and temper with which they might repel the aggressions or avenge the occasional depredations of the border tribes.

"2. I confess, if there were any reasonable probability of inducing the body of the emigrants to return within the settled limits of the colony, under your government, either voluntarily or after a reasonable time, by such methods of compulsion as I have already indicated, such would be the result, which, as you are already aware, Her Majesty's Government would most willingly see accomplished.

"But you and Col. Cloete concur in representing, in the strongest terms, the impossibility of inducing any considerable numbers of these emigrants voluntarily to return to the colony for the sake of British protection; and in your despatches of the 25th of July and the 24th of August you assign very strong reasons why, on this subject, no intermediate mode of compulsion should be adopted.

"Her Majesty's Government have carefully weighed the arguments which you have urged and the difficulties which you have suggested in opposition to such a measure, and I am bound to acknowledge that they appear to us to be almost, if not entirely, conclusive.

"But it appears to us that there are reasons at least equally strong against the third course suggested, that of the

employment against the Boers of a force sufficient to compel their return, or to exterminate them.

“That such a course is within our power, there can be no doubt ; but notwithstanding all the faults of which the emigrants have been guilty, I cannot be insensible to their good qualities, nor to the past hardships which they have undergone ; nor can I reconcile it to my sense, either of humanity or policy, to employ a large British force in the extirpation of a body of industrious colonists, professing allegiance to the British crown, and inviting the savage tribes surrounding them to join in the exterminating process. Measures so extreme could be justified only by a necessity which I am happy to think does not in this case exist.

“There remains then only to be considered the question of the recognition of the territory of Port Natal as a British colony, or part of a British colony.

\* \* \* \*

“The Commissioner will be authorised to call together the principal emigrant farmers and others, and inform them that Her Majesty having been graciously pleased to bury in oblivion past transactions, and desirous of being enabled to rely upon their present assurances of dutiful obedience and loyalty, is anxious to place the institutions of the colony upon such a footing, consistent with the maintenance of her royal authority, as may be most acceptable to the bulk of her subjects. The Commissioner is therefore to be authorised to invite the unreserved expression of their opinions and wishes, in respect to the judicial and other local institutions, under which they may desire to be placed, with an assurance that such expressions, when submitted to Her Majesty, shall receive Her Majesty's most favourable consideration.

"He will cause it to be distinctly understood, however, that this authority does not extend to the question of legislation; on which Her Majesty reserves to herself the most entire freedom of action.

"I think it probable, looking to the nature of the population, that they will desire those institutions to be founded on the Dutch, rather than on the English, model, and however little some of those institutions may be suited to a more advanced state of civilisation, it is the desire of Her Majesty's Government that in this respect the contentment of the emigrants rather than the abstract merits of the institutions should guide our decision."

The principles thus laid down as to the future policy of Her Majesty's Government were so sensible, and approved themselves so entirely to their own wants and wishes, that the meeting resolved at once to adopt them; but a difficulty then arose as to the manner in which this adoption should be penned, and a deputation accordingly again waited upon me, expressive of their desire to know how their submission had best be worded. I at once referred them to the proclamation of His Excellency Sir G. Napier of the 12th May, which, indeed, only embodied the precise terms of Lord Stanley's despatch, and informed them that no deed of submission would be accepted by me which did not embrace and express their entire acceptance of the three conditions set forth in that proclamation, and I referred them to these words, as set forth in that proclamation, viz. :—

"It is also necessary that the Commissioner should most explicitly make known to the emigrants, that what-

ever may be the institutions ultimately sanctioned, these conditions are actually essential:—

“1. That there shall not be, in the eye of the law, any distinction or disqualification whatever, founded on mere distinction of colour, origin, language, or creed, but that the protection of the law, in letter and in substance, shall be extended impartially to all alike.

“2. That no aggression shall be sanctioned upon the natives residing beyond the limits of the colony, under any plea whatever, by any private person, or any body of men, unless acting under the immediate authority and orders of the Government.

“3. That slavery in any shape, or under any modification, is absolutely unlawful, as in every other portion of Her Majesty's dominions.

“You will take care that it be distinctly understood that these three conditions are indispensable preliminaries to the permission which it is proposed to give to the emigrants to occupy the territory of Port Natal, and to enjoy therein a settled government under British protection; and I trust that no difficulty will be found in obtaining the willing acquiescence of the emigrants in stipulations so reasonable, and in our own judgment not more called for by humanity and justice, than essential to the peace and good order of the district.”

Another deputation soon after followed, expressive of the entire concurrence of the Volksraad in the second and third conditions, but stating that they still thought that the first clause should be modified in some shape; it was evident from this that they were still inclined to suggest some special reservation in regard to the rights or liberties of the Kafirs,

and to lay the foundation for separate class-legislation for these; but I repelled all idea of such a nature by at once declaring that I would not admit the slightest departure from those terms, and at length towards the evening the chairman, together with a deputation from the Council, handed me the following declaration, which expressed in the following words their entire and unconditional acceptance of all the terms prescribed by His Excellency.

The document, as translated, runs thus :—

“PIETERMARITZBURG, 8th August.

“SIR,—We, the undersigned members and representatives of the Volksraad, having had in consideration the proclamation of His Excellency the Governor, dated 12th May last, do hereby declare to have agreed to the conditions set forth in the sixth article of the said proclamation, and to accept the same.

Signed by,

J. MARITZ, <i>President</i>	A. J. SPIES
M. J. POTGIETER	P. G. HUMAN
P. R. OTTO	J. A. KRIEL
P. M. ZIETSMAN	M. A. VAN AARDT
B. POORTMAN	G. C. VILJOEN
M. J. PRETORIUS	GERT SNYMAN
J. A. CILLIERS	H. J. VAN DEN BERG
G. R. VAN ROOYEN	A. Z. VISAGE
G. J. NAUDE	M. PRINSLOO
C. F. ROTMAN	C. A. RUTHMAN
L. J. MEYER	N. J. S. BASSON
G. F. POTGIETER	J. BODENSTEIN, <i>Sec. of</i>
P. R. NEL	<i>the Volksraad.</i>

“Addressed to the Hon’ble H. CLOETE,  
Her Majesty’s Commissioner.”

It will be thus seen that this stormy meeting held in this town in August, 1843, after being protracted for three days, had ended in all the twenty-four members of the Volksraad unanimously signing this formal deed; and when it is considered that although Pretorius, Boshof, Zietsman the elder, and several others of the most respectable inhabitants who had no seat in the Volksraad, had yet expressed their entire concurrence in this Proclamation, no doubt can be entertained that this solemn deed of submission to, and recognition of, Her Majesty's authority had been obtained by the deliberate and unanimous voice of all those who had really any stake or interest in the country; and with every friend of humanity it became a matter of heartfelt satisfaction, and of gratitude to the Great Disposer of human affairs, that this had been brought about by a perfectly free and unbiassed judgment of the constituted authorities at the time, without any threats or pressure from without; but I cannot close this lecture without recording my sincere acknowledgment that this peaceable and satisfactory termination of the broils of the inhabitants with the Government had thus been chiefly effected by the influence of (the now deceased) Andries Pretorius, of Stephanus Maritz, of Mr. Boshof, of Dr. Poortman, and the Zietsmans, father and son, who proved themselves true friends of the welfare of this country, which (despite many difficulties with which it has had to contend) has made



during these last twelve years a steady progress in social, agricultural, and commercial improvement.

These persons chiefly opened the eyes of their countrymen to the delusion under which they had long laboured, either as to their power of self-government and independence, or the still more vain hope of foreign support; and I trust I may now venture to express my sincere thankfulness to them for the aid they afforded me during those trying scenes.

You have now been informed of the true state of things in this district from its early formation until the formal submission of its inhabitants to Her Majesty's authority; you will perceive how errors and faults, committed on both sides, threatened at one time to plunge this country into an interminable civil war, and how <sup>near</sup> this was most providentially averted, chiefly by the influence of reason and good sense actuating the minds of the leading men in this community, who became fully impressed that Her Majesty's Government, bound to assert its authority and dignity on the one hand, was yet inclined to confer upon them every advantage consistent with true liberty; for liberty (we jurists know) does not consist in doing everything any individual in society pleases, but only in doing that which is not contrary to law and higher authority — "*nisi quod vi aut jure prohibeatur*"; and I cannot give

you a more striking proof of the effect which the dissemination of those principles of Her Majesty's Government produced, even upon those who, "with curses loud and deep," had broken up from the deliberations of the Volksraad, and had returned to their homes in the Sovereignty, than that four months after these occurrences had taken place I was agreeably surprised by a deputation arriving here, headed by the two most influential inhabitants of the Modder and Caledon rivers, Van den Heever and Overholster, who presented me a memorial, signed by 500 actual landholders in that district, soliciting that I might also extend my labours to the country from the Draaksberg to the banks of the Orange River, and that a very large majority of the inhabitants there were willing also to subscribe to the same terms as the inhabitants of this district. —

I at once informed them that I had personally no objection to proceed to their country and arrange matters there in the same way as I was doing here, but that the decision on this memorial must rest altogether with the Governor of the Cape Colony, to whom the memorial would be transmitted. This I accordingly did; but in the meantime "a new king arose in Egypt who knew not Joseph," or, in a plainer language, another Governor (Sir Peregrine Maitland) had come out and superseded Sir George Napier, whose period of holding a government, under the Queen's regulations, had long expired.

This Governor, who probably felt no such deep interest in these matters or countries as his predecessor, or had received more stringent rules to carry out, simply replied "that the application could not be entertained."

It is therefore vain now to indulge in speculations how the affairs of the Orange River Territory would have proceeded if the same policy had been followed out towards them ; but the following little anecdote will show the zeal and prudence with which that deputation had performed the trust confided to them. Some days before their arrival at this place we had heard a report that a deputation was on its way here, but that they had been stopped and waylaid by some of the "Ultra-Radical party" behind the mountain. On their presenting themselves to me I alluded to this report, and begged to be informed whether there was any truth in it, when old Overholster replied that there was some truth in it, that the signing of this memorial and its object were necessarily known throughout the country, and that at the Sand River Drift (which they were obliged to cross on their way here), an armed party from the neighbourhood had surrounded them, and declaring them "traitors" to their country had positively and violently threatened to attack them unless they delivered up the memorial to them. But Overholster proceeded : "We had also anticipated and provided for such an occurrence, for after a show of resistance

we somewhat reluctantly took out of the front chest of my waggon the memorial which had been placed there, and which they carried off in triumph; but at the same time we had had a duplicate prepared of the same document, and signed by all the 500 landowners as the other; this duplicate I kept in the bedding of my 'katel,' and now deliver with its seals quite intact."

This little incident shows at least the earnestness with which they had set about to have the same boon conferred on them as had been granted to the inhabitants of this district; and the latter would be ungrateful indeed if they failed now to acknowledge and be thankful for the very many blessings which have been vouchsafed to them as a community during the last twelve years.

I fear, at least, that I am not only deeply indebted to those influential persons whose names I have just given as the real benefactors of their country; but, independent of this feeling, I could not but be sensible every day during the momentous events by which I was surrounded, that there was a Divinity throughout, watchful of the interests of this favoured country, and whose right hand was then, and has ever since been, protecting it from the horrors of the savage wars by which the Cape frontier and the Sovereignty have been afflicted; that here, at least, during all those years, neither war, famine, nor pestilence has afflicted the country; but, on the contrary, with whatever difficulties the

first introduction of a settled government may have been beset, it has slowly but surely progressed in the development of every resource from which the true prosperity of a country depends.

Everywhere around us we perceive striking signs of improvement, both in our *social, moral, agricultural*, and even *political* relations; and the inestimable blessing of peace, which we have so long enjoyed, only requires to be continued to bring these advantages into full maturity.

As I shall probably within a few days terminate all further connection with the Natal district, in bidding you an affectionate farewell I may, then, be permitted, I trust, to express a hope that you may not only long continue in the enjoyment of those blessings, but that, by your public acts as a community, and by your conduct in the relations of private life, you may render yourselves worthy of the continuance of those blessings from the Divine Disposer of events.

*Esto perpetua!*

